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# Evangelism and Baptism

J. M. ROSE

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**BAPTIST SUNDAY SCHOOL BOARD,  
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# Evangelism and Baptism

## The New Testament Method

“Make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”  
Matt. 28:19.

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J. M. FROST, LL. D.

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no. 1,

To  
The Younger Preachers  
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of Teaching  
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of  
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## DR. CAMPBELL MORGAN'S PREFERENCE.

In a sermon on "The True Order of Missionary Work" with the Great Commission as his text, Dr. G. Campbell Morgan, pastor of a Congregational Church in London and highly honored in America, gives his preference concerning baptism as follows:

"The first thing I have to say is that there is no question at all that baptism in those (New Testament) days meant immersion. That is not open to question. . . .

"I affirm, unhesitatingly, that the original word means immersion; I affirm that, in order to point out that the symbol that Jesus commanded was a symbol suggesting death into life. In the whelming beneath the waters we have the symbol of death. In the emergence from the waters we have the symbol of life beyond the death, resurrection, life. . . .

*"I prefer to abide by the primitive rite in the old and simple form. Seeing that the Lord did leave with us who bear his name only two simple rites or ceremonies—that of his table and that of baptism—I prefer to follow his command according to the earliest method."*

# TABLE OF CONTENTS.

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	PAGE
Dr. Campbell Morgan's Preference .....	4
The Basal Thought of All—A Foreword.....	7

## PART I.

### EVANGELISM AND BAPTISM.

Fullness of the Symbol .....	16
I. Evangelism with the Baptismal Note.....	17
II. The Spirit, Form and Purpose of Baptism...	30
III. The "One Million Baptisms".....	43
IV. "The Greatest of All Easter Pictures;" or, The Resurrection of Jesus as Seen in Baptism .....	51
V. Baptism and the Wonders of Pentecost....	60
VI. The Relation of the Ordinances.....	75
VII. Two Memorials with One Meaning.....	85
VIII. The Lord's Supper in Revival Meetings....	91
IX. Magnifying the Local Church.....	101
X. Left His Chariot to be Baptized .....	110
XI. The Baptism of Saul of Tarsus.....	120
XII. Baptism and the Evangelical Faith.....	132
XIII. Will Sprinkling Do as Well for Baptism?..	143
XIV. The Voice of Conscience in Baptism.....	154
XV. Baptism a Figure of Salvation.....	165

## TABLE OF CONTENTS—Continued.

---

### PART II.

#### FIVE LECTURES IN OUTLINE.\*

	PAGE
The Ordinances—Baptism and the Supper—Their Doctrinal Content .....	173
A Statuary of Truth .....	174
General Introduction .....	175
I. Their Doctrine Concerning God .....	177
II. Their Doctrine of Atonement for Sin .....	181
III. Their Doctrine of a New Heart .....	190
IV. Their Doctrine of a Godly Life.....	196
V. Their Doctrine of the Final Triumph .....	203

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\* Delivered at State Workers' Institute, Arkadelphia, Ark.,  
Feb. 20-25, 1912.

## THE BASAL THOUGHT OF ALL. A FOREWORD.

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THIS is something more than "just another book on baptism." The plea is for Evangelism plus the great ordinance—a plea for New Testament order and ideal. It comes of definite purpose, and is distinctive somewhat both in viewpoint and method. It is a message for the practical worth and larger service in certain great phases of gospel teaching and practice, of which our people have been foremost champions.

The baptismal question and some of the great baptismal texts and occasions of the New Testament are brought forward in a constructive way, and in their relation to evangelism and salvation. The ordinances, baptism having the larger space, are magnified in their didactic character and function with renewed emphasis also on their sacred nature and ceremonial value. Sacraments they are, indeed, when this imperial word is used in its original sense of supreme authority—the believer's oath of allegiance and loyalty to Christ his Sovereign and Saviour.

A prominent member from one of the best churches in the South compared the preaching of two of his pastors as follows—one gave him clearer and more exalted view of God, the other gave him more adequate view of baptism in its larger and richer meaning. The first is the basal thought, while the second is the motive and aim

of what is contained in the following pages. Indeed, the two are not far apart, viewed from the standpoint of the New Testament and of a full, well-rounded pulpit ministration. For any study of baptism worth while will surely develop its wonderful relation to God as the basis of its own exalted character, and a study of God's wondrous grace and his effort for its expression will bring one inevitably within the field of this greatest of all symbols.

The word—baptism—is the name of this ordinance of the New Testament, and indicates the form of its administration with unvarying regularity and emphasis. But the ordinance itself, though impossible without this form, is yet larger than its name in fullness and richness of symbol. Its component parts are all essential to its integrity, whether considered separately or in a unit. The following answers, expressive of its several phases, are indispensable in considering the ordinance, but no one of them is adequate as a definition:

1.

What Is Baptism?

A New Testament Ordinance.

2.

What Is Baptism?

A Physical Act of Immersion in Water.

3.

What Is Baptism?

A Specified Command of Christ.



4.

What Is Baptism?

The Believer's Special Act of Obedience.

5.

What Is Baptism?

A Service of Faith, Loyalty and Worship.

6.

What Is Baptism?

A Symbol of Wonderful Realities.

It takes all this and perhaps more to make baptism, and every item is essential to its integrity and fullness of meaning. The immersion, for example, though in a sense the lowest in the scale, is yet basal to all the others, the one essential form, and indispensable in its administration. There may be the physical act of immersion as the name baptism requires, but it *cannot be baptism* except there be in addition the qualities of spirit and purpose herein named, as its life, character and adornment.

This booklet, which is devoted to these great matters of New Testament life and teaching, consists of two parts. The first part, as explained in Number 2, consists of fifteen articles previously published. They will show some repetition from one to the other, which was partly unavoidable and partly not sought to be avoided. Not that quotations are made from one to the other, but words and phrases, now from this point of view and now from that, iteration and reiteration, to illustrate and enforce the great subjects under

consideration, hoping by some means to reach their aim and fasten in heart and mind the different features and functions of this great ordinance.

The second part presents in outline five lectures on The Doctrinal Content of the Ordinances—baptism and the supper, which were delivered at Arkadelphia, Ark., in a State Workers' Institute, February 20-25, 1912. They were not written out and I have misgiving as to their publication in this shape, but some think they will be helpful in the way of suggestion. It is a growing wonder with me how largely the great doctrines of the New Testament find embodiment with emphasis and illustrative power in these two memorials,—souvenirs, one of the cross, and the other of the empty sepulchre.

Are we meeting the claims of Christ concerning these two ordinances of the gospel system? The ordinary views of baptism even among our own people seem at times inadequate—not incorrect as far as they go, but *inadequate*. Having made good the contention for immersion as the form, we are in danger lest we become satisfied with that as being all there is of it—as if one should lay the foundation of his house, and then not go on to build and equip his home. There is great need for emphasis of the other phases of the ordinance by all proper method. Baptism speaks volumes for itself, even for immersion, if only its significant nature and wonderful symbolic import can be fully developed

and brought to the front. Its marvelous didactic power for the gospel of grace has scarcely had a fair opportunity or showing.

The little book, "In Christ," by Dr. A. J. Gordon, came into my life in the early years of my ministry, and was almost the first to open my eyes and touch my heart with the charm and beauty of baptism in its symbolic use. He was not discussing the ordinance, but like Paul was using it to illustrate some of the greatest spiritual truths, like the believer's union with Christ and his risen life in him. This opens a wide, rich and far-reaching subject for study. Ordinarily we appeal to the symbolism of the ordinance to prove immersion as the form, but Dr. Gordon appealed to baptism as immersion to illustrate and enforce these great evangelistic truths, and so set before the Christian world an illustrious example of teaching through the larger use of the ordinance. For there is no finer or more powerful exhibit of what grace has done and will yet do than is shown in these ordinances of the Lord's house. For this reason no doubt they were set in their place so conspicuous and commanding in gospel teaching and Christian experience.

Important scriptures concerning baptism,—great baptismal passages,—made familiar and famous in former years as controversial texts, are now scarcely used at all. There has been reaction from the old controversy, and the reaction has gone too far and brought on an indifference that is almost deadly in its influence

on Christian character and life. These texts lie at the very heart of the gospel, and sometimes carry its very marrow and fatness in doctrinal teaching and experiential grace. Baptism is never presented in these pages for itself, but always for those mighty things which it so powerfully sets forth in figure and symbol. Why should not these very scriptures become even now a fresh power in Zion, not as of old, but in a positive, constructive way, and without reference to controversy or opposing people be made an evangel like living pictures in the present-day preaching? It would be a fresh emphasis of New Testament truth by means of a New Testament method. This in part is the aim and purpose of this writing.

A noble sermon on the Spiritual Meaning of Baptism was said by some one, "to be the final word on the design of baptism." It was strong, out of the ordinary, and deserved the high word. As a matter of fact, however, there can be no final word on baptism in any of its phases. Especially is it true that whoever may speak the great word, others need to speak it for themselves and so keep the wonderful message on the wing. There is need for individual study and individual expression from one's own experience and conviction. This cannot be done by reading an article on baptism, or a volume, or by preaching one sermon, or a sermon now and then at long intervals. But much more is required than all this, and by such methods as the thoughtful and devout will devise for themselves.

Large use, of course, may be made of what others have done, in a way to suggest and stimulate, possibly to direct somewhat, but here is a work of tremendous moment for mind and heart, which each one must undertake for himself, with the New Testament as his guide and inspiration. Must we not face the question in all seriousness, whether the ordinances have been given in our thinking and life, the high place and use which are theirs by right? Have we done our duty toward these ordinances? This question should appeal to everyone who has experienced the grace of God in his heart, who is concerned for spiritual and evangelical truth, and who is warm in his devotion and loyalty to Christ and Christ's cause. If the high duty goes unattended to, then we suffer, the cause of truth suffers, and Christ is dishonored in the things which are his. A better and nobler way, however, is open for us, if only we set our hearts to walk in it.

Surely this must be a great matter that claims our attention, since Christ himself was baptized and then gave baptism its commanding place in his final word of conquest; since the Apostle Peter following his Lord and in the first victories of the cross set baptism among the wonders of Pentecost; and since Saul of Tarsus, notwithstanding his vision of midday glory and his receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit, was yet baptized and ever after cherished the meaning of his baptism as symbolizing his greatest experience of grace and the forecast of his final triumph.

Surely unless we know all that is to be known concerning these great ordinances, we must follow on to know more and more of the charm and beauty of their figure and symbol.

### **Suggested Topics for Sermons.**

As illustrating the wide scope open to the preacher in preaching on baptism, I venture to suggest a list of subjects. Of course as many more could be easily added and then leave the field unexhausted.

Baptizing Them into the Name . . . of the Holy Spirit.

Baptism and the Believer's Union with Christ.  
Our Baptism the Christ Uniform.

Baptism a Service of Worship.

The Resurrection of Jesus and Baptism.

The Relation of Baptism to the Godhead.

Baptism an Act of Obedience.

Baptism as a Resurrection.

Baptism—Physical Act and Spiritual Meaning.

The Experience of Grace and Baptism.

The Ordinances—Their Educative Quality.

Baptism—Its Meaning in Its Form.

What Baptism Says for God.

Baptism a Confession of Faith.

Baptism unto Repentance.

Baptism as a Monument.

"One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism."

The Demand of Baptism for Newness of Life.

Baptized into Christ, Baptized into His Death.

The Lord's Death and the Lord's Supper.

The Lord's Supper and His Resurrection Life.

# Part I.

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## EVANGELISM AND BAPTISM THE NEW TESTAMENT METHOD.

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“As A. J. Gordon puts it: ‘Baptism is the sacrament which the church holds as a perpetual trust from her ascended Lord, and which holds for the church in perpetual preservation the doctrine in which her life is bound up.’ Preserve the ordinance in its original form and you preserve the doctrine. Distort the ordinance either as to its subjects or its mode of observance, and you distort the doctrine which it was designed to enshrine and safeguard and express.”

## FULLNESS OF THE SYMBOL.

"How beautifully significant is baptism as it was appointed by the divine Founder of Christianity and enjoined upon all of his disciples! 'Go ye into all the world, disciple all nations, baptizing them.' It is the symbol of the most sacred truths, the condensed biography of the redeeming Son of God, the Gospel in miniature, the record of the deepest human experience, the silent utterance of saving faith, the soul's consecration to a new life, the epitome of God's revealed will to men, the proclamation of cleansing grace to a sin-stained world, the most eloquent sermon that was ever preached.

"If the minister is humbly conscious of his inability to express the glorious Gospel of the blessed God in words, he did express it when he himself was baptized, and he has expressed it at the baptism of every happy convert. When we consider its fullness of meaning, its divine appointment, its first recipient in the waters of the Jordan that he might fulfill all righteousness and foreshadow his overwhelming baptism of suffering, how carefully should baptism always be administered—with what reverent hands, with what prayerful spirit, with what solemn stillness, as if in the presence of the descending Dove in momentary expectation of the Father's approving voice."—*Dr. Henry M. King, in Baptist World*, Nov. 4, 1915.



## I.

# EVANGELISM WITH THE BAPTISMAL NOTE.\*

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IN the evangelistic campaigns of the New Testament, when the foundations of historical Christianity and of the Christian system in its didactic character were being laid, baptism and baptizing held commanding place. It was something of a banner for display of the truth, served in a way almost as the key note of triumph, and made public the victories of the cross. The record tells in terms of baptism how the work went on, how the word of the Lord was magnified and supplemented in this ordinance of the Lord, either by the multitudes who were baptized or by the baptism of individual persons whose distinction added to the distinction of the simple rite, as with the treasurer of the Ethiopian queen or Saul of Tarsus at Damascus.

We are laying much stress upon evangelism, but are we as bold as those early preachers in sounding the baptismal note? They were not afraid of being misunderstood in setting a ceremony well to the fore, not that they preached on baptism though doubtless telling of its meaning; but they preached, men were converted, and bap-

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\* *The Baptist World*, Louisville, Ky., Sept. 30, 1915.

tism followed. They were not deterred either that an occasional Simon Magus came on the scene, or lest "an externality" in religion should in some way be mistaken for the inner spiritual experience of grace.

### **Illustrating My Plea.**

How close are we to the New Testament methods—or how far away? I recall the Tabernacle meetings at Nashville, in which I took no small part, did my utmost indeed for their furtherance and to gather the fruitage which at best was scant enough. We had the services of the most successful evangelists, and enormous crowds waited on their ministry. The reports as to the outcome told how many hundreds "signed cards" for this or that, or "held up their hands" in testimony of some important proposition, or "gave their hands to the evangelists" in token of some promise or pledge for the future. So it would go on night after night, day after day, through a succession of evangelistic meetings year after year, until Mr. Moody himself said, "Nashville was the worst burnt-over town" he ever saw.

This is written simply for illustration and not to depreciate those meetings or meetings like them. There was much sincere and serious earnestness, some exceptionally fine preaching, especially by Mr. Moody, much also of spiritual enjoyment and uplift, and without doubt genuine conversions unto the Lord. But one note was missing which rang clear and strong in the evan-

gelistic campaigns of John, of Christ, and of the preachers who came after. The question of how many were baptized is all right as a New Testament inquiry, but as to those Tabernacle meetings would have been thought out of place, possibly hurtful and wrong. But if we want New Testament evangelism why not follow New Testament methods in directing our campaigns, and New Testament standards in estimating results? And is it not more than probable that in shutting off the baptismal note we lose both the evangelistic and evangelical power which the remarkable ordinance holds in its symbolic import and didactic character?

### **Laying Historical Foundations.**

The New Testament record is as clear as the noonday and powerfully impressive in its emphasis and enforcement of the things which I am here venturing to mention. No word of mine can exaggerate or even match the wonderful account of how the work was carried forward at the first, and how baptism came to its commanding position and everywhere marked the triumphs of the cross both in the hearts and lives of men.

First came John, preaching and baptizing—a man sent of God to preach and baptize after the heavenly pattern—preached repentance for the remission of sin—heralded the coming of the Messianic reign—baptized the people in token of their inner change and of their alignment and

allegiance with the new order. Immense crowds flocked to his ministry and baptism, coming from Jerusalem, from all Judea and from regions beyond Jordan, and were baptized of him in the Jordan confessing their sins.

Some came indeed who heard him tell of the wrath to come, had felt the power and pungency of his preaching, but lacked the inner change required by the new rite, missed the whole meaning of his message. These were sent away for a change of mind and heart, and until they could bring forth fruit meet for repentance. It was a new day in Israel. A new preacher had arisen with a new message. The kingdom of God was coming in, coming in after his plan through this first evangelistic campaign of the New Testament—a campaign of God's ordering, with the baptismal note clear and strong, and which served as a call to repentance, emphasized the need of the inner change, called for a new life, and signaled the coming of the King.

Christ then came on the scene, preaching the kingdom of God, calling sinners to repentance, seeking to save the lost, and so opened what I venture to call the second evangelistic campaign of the New Testament. He came from his home in Nazareth unto John to be baptized of him in the Jordan, began his public life with his baptism in the river, while the heavens opened above, the Holy Spirit descended, the Father gave his approval and made public announcement in his behalf.

Much is said of his teaching and preaching, of his healing and other miracles, of how people crowded upon his ministry, yet no record is made of their flocking to his baptism as they did to the baptism of John. There is one word, however, incidental as it were, but distinct, unmistakable in meaning and full of significance: "Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John (though Jesus himself baptized not but his disciples)." These words illustrate how much went on in his ministry that did not get in the record, give emphasis to the order of baptizing those who first became disciples, and show how those baptized by his disciples are counted as having received baptism at the hands of our Lord. So to this day, following his example, his leadership, we have the commanding word: "Thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness."

### **The Disciples with a New Charge.**

Then the third campaign, but differing in no essential features from those preceding. The disciples under their new commission and with the power of the Holy Spirit from on high, began their evangelistic labors with the same baptismal note as was heard from John and from our Lord himself. Like their predecessors, they preached repentance for the remission of sin, and baptized in token of the work of grace wrought within. This was the preaching of Pentecost, and its startling results, added to the wonders of the day,

were told as if for emphasis in baptismal terms: "They that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." The stirring scenes of the Jordan, with the preaching and baptizing, had been transferred to Jerusalem, and from this center the good news would go to the uttermost parts of the earth, telling in word and symbol the wonderful achievements of God's grace among men.

### **Why This Pre-Eminence for Baptism.**

Furthermore, the following considerations are offered for this high place given to the great ordinance in the efforts of the apostles, namely: its place of honor in the commission, its relation to organized Christianity, its didactic emphasis of evangelical truth, together with its outward expression in symbolic form of the work of grace wrought within the heart.

Evangelize is the first word of the great commission for making disciples of all nations; but the second is like unto it, and bears equally the authority of Jesus, declares for his Sovereignty and Deity, pledges obedience and allegiance to him—"baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." Surely ordinance never had more distinguished setting! It is magnified in its relation to the Godhead, while in turn each of the three divine persons has separate mention, is honored and

glorified in this simple service of ceremonial obedience and worship. Its right administration in spirit, form and purpose, is to this day a wonderful profession of faith in this perhaps the profoundest truth of New Testament teaching. Simple enough indeed, and yet an act of obedience and worship which expresses in an outward way the loftiest emotions of the human soul.

Baptism, moreover, with its companion ordinance, the Memorial Supper, was at the very start wrought into the texture and structure of organized Christianity, as seen in the individual church—first at Jerusalem and then in other individual churches as they were multiplied throughout the world and throughout the centuries even to this day. The ordinance is inherent in church organization and life, promotive of its welfare and expressive of its distinctive character.

The record makes it clear, almost with startling effect, how these two ordinances were promptly brought to the fore on the day of Pentecost, and shows already their fixed and commanding place in the church, marking its increase in numbers, fellowship and spiritual power. "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."

In telling of further displays of grace and power, the record shows the great ordinance as holding a high place in the preaching and practice of the apostles—as the banner of an army marching to conquest.

The high official from Ethiopia, converted as he rode in his chariot, sought baptism at the hand of Philip as honor and privilege, no less than obligation and duty. So also with Saul of Tarsus, held in the power of his midday vision of glory, happy and obedient in his new experience of saving grace, and having already profound conviction of the Lordship of Jesus; and the word—"Why tarriest thou, arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins; calling on the name of the Lord," had prompt response from this Hebrew of the Hebrews, this Pharisee of the Pharisees. Surely symbol never bore profounder content of meaning or told its story with more charm and power.

**Told in Word, Repeated in Symbol.**

For further illustration see how word and symbol combine in the apostolic ministry. They made large and noble use of the symbolic import and worth of baptism to illumine and enforce the most momentous matters ever presented for human consideration.

They preached Christ crucified but risen from the dead with the fullness of saving power, while baptism showed in figure and picture his resurrection and the empty sepulchre left behind in the garden—with the oft repeated word, "He is not here. He is risen as he said; come see the place where the Lord lay."

They preached the believer's union with Christ, his spiritual resurrection and his being a new



creature, his prior need of a new heart within and a new life without as one risen from the dead; and while baptism cannot work the change within, cannot make the heart new or help to make one clean of sin, cannot save or help to save, yet in marvelous fashion this wonderful ordinance gives an outward expression of these inner changes, demands a new heart of all who would be baptized, sets a line between the old life and the new, and requires newness of walk in all who wear its badge of distinction and honor.

They preached that we do not belong to ourselves but to him who hath washed us in his own precious blood, to whom we owe all allegiance and loyalty—while baptism is the obedience of one saved through faith in Christ, and whose baptismal vows are his pledge to honor and serve the King.

They preached triumph for this life with the final resurrection of the dead to follow—while baptism in a figure, clear and bold, is a forecast for the fulfillment of the promise, when the voice of the Son of man shall speak the word and the dead shall come from their graves.

This New Testament ordinance holds all these great truths in symbol, and sets them out with something like dramatic effect in the immersion of a believer upon profession of faith in Christ Jesus as his Saviour and Lord. So much so and with such power, that the sign is sometimes mistaken for the thing signified, the shadow for the substance. But the distinction is clear and need

not be misunderstood. Appeal is sometimes made to the symbolism of its form in proof of immersion, the rather should we appeal to the ordinance in its symbolic import to enforce the wonderful things for which it stands. Baptism demands a new heart indeed, but a new heart also demands baptism, which is "the answer of a good conscience toward God." The question of the Ethiopian convert—"See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" is at the very base of the philosophy of Christian experience and life.

#### **Following the New Testament Example.**

Such is the place and rank assigned the great ordinance in the evangelistic services of the New Testament. Such is the one New Testament pattern set for evangelism in the churches and there is no mistaking the baptismal note throughout its pages. It was fitting then, and cannot be out of place for modern Christianity. It shows the base lines on which the work was conducted then with power and effectiveness. It may be our despair or inspiration—despair if the note is too high for us, but inspiration if only we can grow its spirit, hold steadfastly to its standard and lofty endeavor. Surely it must be right to follow where the New Testament leads.

We should not be deterred because baptism has sometimes been overdone as an ordinance, for it has sometimes also been fearfully under-

estimated. All the more indeed should we set ourselves to maintain its New Testament standard and spirit, position, meaning and use, as a thing commanded of the King and holding in symbol the achievements of grace which he has wrought.

### **The Modern Reformer's Misfit.**

The ordinance has suffered, and consequently the truth which it conveys has also suffered, by reaction from men who have gone to the extreme of either overwrought or inadequate views. To stand between, say the word that ought to be said, insist on a return to New Testament simplicity, teaching and standards, is indeed a mission altogether worthy, and should command the attention of Christian people everywhere.

Baptism was sadly misplaced by Alexander Campbell, and in his hands lost its real value, its original spirit and purpose, and incidentally suffered even as to its "mode"—more perhaps than from any other one man of modern times. He turned away from his former pedobaptist notion, that baptism is a "mere rite," a "mere ceremony," an "externality in religion" of little or no consequence, but immediately went to the other extreme, and developed his theory of salvation through obedience in this specific act. He did not put too much stress upon obedience, but misplaced it egregiously in the scheme of grace.

Had he spent his strength in magnifying obedience as essential in the divine economy, and in-

sisted on baptism as the obedience of the saved man, then he would have wrought a reformation indeed, and brought the whole Christian world under obligation to him. But as it was, though he came so close to a principle of tremendous moment, he yet missed it so far as to develop, or rather revise in perhaps modified form, the two most deadly errors in Christian history, namely, baptismal regeneration and baptismal remission of sins.

The Christian world revolted and still revolts, though he won his followers and they have increased with the years while the evil continues to work its mischief. He and his followers have rendered valuable service in maintaining the meaning of the word baptism, and defending immersion as the original form, but they have done more harm than can ever be told in getting baptism misplaced in the Christian system and misfit in Christian experience.

His right form became confused, even identified, in the minds of the people with the wrong design. Devout people, caught in the confusion, revolt at Mr. Campbell's wrong "design of baptism," and think they are revolting from his "mode of baptism." And the reaction has gone so far and with such hurtful influence that obedience itself is discounted and discredited as fundamental and essential in the divine government.

**Still Making Our Plea.**

Over against all this stands our plea for the ordinance in its proper spirit, form and purpose. Indeed, baptism itself with its New Testament significance and emphasis is a profound and oft repeated protest against Campbell's whole false and ruinous scheme. With that discarded, the plea is renewed for the baptismal note in our evangelistic work as sounded throughout the New Testament and as a note which has the honor of heaven upon it.

We need to grow in ourselves a rich sentiment for the ordinance, a sentiment which magnifies its usefulness, greatness and didactic power; because it is commanded of our Lord and requires obedience and fulfillment of his word; because he himself walked in this way, a baptized Saviour leading a saved and baptized people; and because he has charged the ordinance in its symbolic import with such tremendous significance, making it to reflect his honor, his gracious work of grace within, and his achievement of resurrection power and glory, both as historic monument for the past and prophetic foregleam of triumphant future.

## II.

### THE SPIRIT, FORM AND PURPOSE OF BAPTISM.\*

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“Go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.”—Matt. 28: 19, 20.

This is the final article, but three, of a series written in the last six or seven months, and published in the denominational papers. This method of publication was chosen partly to avoid the monotony of a series, but also for the further double object of securing a wider range of reading and to serve these papers by contributing to their columns. The several papers were selected sometimes on the request of the editor, and sometimes on local conditions—with regret that there were not enough articles to include all the papers. The articles were written but not published in the order here named—some of them at this writing having not yet been published:

1. “The Greatest of All Easter Pictures.”
2. “The One Million Baptisms.”

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\* *The Word and Way*, Kansas City, Mo., Nov. 25, 1915.

3. Two Memorials with One Meaning.
4. Evangelism with the Baptismal Note.
5. Baptism a Figure of Salvation.
6. Baptism and the Wonders of Pentecost.
7. The Baptism of Saul of Tarsus.
8. Left His Chariot to Be Baptized.
9. The Relation of the Ordinances.
10. Baptists and the Evangelical Faith.
11. The Voice of Conscience in Baptism.
12. The Spirit, Form and Purpose of Baptism.
13. The Lord's Supper in Revival Meetings.
14. Magnifying the Local Church.
15. Will Sprinkling Do as Well for Baptism?

These articles were a growth, not having special connection, but not without continuity of thought and common aim. They assume throughout that the great ordinance requires a given spirit, and form, and purpose, as essential to its integrity and lofty mission. If this were not true the discussions would be without meaning and the articles impossible. Every question concerning baptism, whether of spirit, or form, or purpose, or whatsoever, rests back on the New Testament for final appeal in definition and decision. This is the supreme standard not as against the Old Testament in any way, but because the new system must have its government in the New Testament, which holds within its record not only Christ's history but also his word and will.

**Christ Sets Baptism in Place.**

The words at the head of this article, known everywhere as the great commission, were spoken at the climax of his earthly career, and comprehended the future ages in the magnitude and beneficence of this glorious enterprise. From this comes as its rich product all Christian life, history and literature. They indicate at the very start and with impressive emphasis what is to be the spirit and form and purpose of this great ordinance which he was committing to his disciples. Whatever baptism is, it is because our Lord so commanded. It was to go wherever his disciples and his gospel went, was their obligation and privilege, and was to share in the honor and glory of the mighty things they were to do. If for any consideration we think of baptism as being lower than the commission, we at once get below the estimate which Christ had and commanded concerning it.

He made promise of his personal presence in five items, and we may expect the presence of our Lord in one as in the others, namely, in going as missionaries, in making disciples, in baptizing, in teaching the observance of his commandments, and all this for the ages. This must mean that he in his august and gracious person is present in our baptizing and being baptized, that every baptism rightly conducted repeats somewhat the scene of his own baptism in the Jordan, and shines in the glory of the eternal Godhead. This



gives to the simple Christian ceremony a renown and dignity beyond human thought, and should guarantee on our part the right spirit, and form and purpose, as he intended and commanded. This alone is worthy and comports with the high course which he himself marked out both in precept and example. It makes plain and gives definite emphasis to the proper spirit essential in its administration.

### **The Spirit Which It Requires.**

It is the threefold spirit of faith, obedience and worship. This is of the very genius and spirit of *baptizing into the name* of the persons of the Godhead. That formula means all this and much more. Being first an outward physical act—one which some count homely—baptism is yet *a great sentiment* born of the richest and most blessed experience possible in the human soul—a sentiment to be sought and cultivated by all who share in the beautiful ceremony. Much depends here upon the preacher who has the service in charge, not however by any sacerdotal or ecclesiastical right. But his own spirit of devotion, his attitude of heart and mind toward the ordinance, his delicacy and efficiency of management—these are the things which carry into baptism the spirit of worship and give its observance devout sacredness of meaning. It is a ceremonial service which should be undertaken only by such persons as come into it with faith and sincerity, with no misgiving as to its being what Jesus requires, and

who are capable of heart and head to feel the touch of its wonderful and momentous symbol of burial and resurrection from the dead.

There is danger lest in this great transaction we have the letter and miss the spirit, have the form and miss the beauty and power of its meaning—not that baptism is a prescribed form of worship—by no means. For there are no prescribed forms of worship, whether this or that, provided only that God be worshiped in spirit and in truth. However, baptism is a ceremony of such ceremonial character in its relation to the Godhead as requires the heart of devout worship and this in turn means the spirit of faith and sincerity, of willing and loyal obedience to him who gave us the ordinance and in his own life set the model of its observance. It is for those—and only those—who repent and have faith in him as Lord and Saviour, and can for themselves render this great act of personal obedience.

#### **Giving Up One and Choosing Another.**

This is finely illustrated in the case of Dr. Adoniram Judson and his noble wife, pioneer missionaries of a century ago. While en route to the missionary field, in the study of the New Testament while sailing the high seas, they changed their views of baptism and foresaw at once an inevitable change in their denominational connection. They discarded infant baptism both

of themselves and as a New Testament practice, abandoned sprinkling as baptism, saw immersion as the only form, and came to the feeling, deep and strong of personal conviction, that baptism must be a personal obedience. It was a wrenching of soul to them in the struggle, but satisfaction and joy in its consummation. It cost them such sacrifices as try the souls of men, but they came to the ordinance with an abiding feeling of peace and devoutness of spirit.

"We expect soon to be baptized," Mrs. Judson wrote home, reciting the cause of their action, telling of their struggle and trial of heart, of their satisfaction and joyous spirit in walking in this way of their Lord, and added: "Oh, may our hearts be prepared for that holy ordinance!" A noble sentiment indeed and well becoming the great service which they had in mind, a sentiment just as sacred, rich in emotional power, and marked with spiritual fervor, as belongs to its companion ceremony, the memorial supper of our Lord—the great souvenir of the cross.

#### **The Name Determines Its Form.**

In addition and equally with all this, *the form of baptism* is also essential to the integrity of the ordinance and indispensable to its observance. Its form cannot take the place of its spirit, neither can its spirit take the place of its form. Back of the life, leaf and fruit of the tree, is the tree-form essential to their expression and even basal to

their outward growth of beauty and richness. While baptism is not a prescribed form of worship, it has itself a form of its own. That form is prescribed in unvarying regularity in its name. *Its name is its form*, baptize equaling immerse, baptism equaling immersion. This word—the one word used always to name the ordinance—always means immerse, literally as when Jesus was immersed in the river Jordan, or figuratively as when Paul speaks of being “buried with Christ by baptism into death.” This is the one New Testament word for the ordinance, and the one New Testament pattern for its observance. Without it there can be no baptism, as there can be no immersion without an immersion.

There are other words for other forms in modern use, but they are not of the New Testament to describe this ordinance. There are Greek words for pouring and sprinkling and washing, but not one of them is ever applied to baptism in any way. *It is the one ordinance with the one word*—baptize; and no other word in any language has been so sifted in the world of scholarship by friend and foe, as this word, and after years of conflict, more today than ever before, it marks baptism as a physical act of immersion. And the ordinance with its rich sentiment, its spiritual meaning, even in the rapture of worship, cannot get away from this one word with its one meaning—first the immersion as the physical act and then comes all its spiritual significance.

The other forms, or "other modes," of baptism, have been inherited from Romanism by modern Christianity. But these are not of the New Testament. The issue of the one form with "the other modes," in the last analysis, is almost exclusively an issue between the New Testament and the Roman Catholic claim of authority. On their boasted right to change the ordinance they made infants, even unborn infants, proper subjects of baptism, substituted for immersion pouring and sprinkling as suitable "modes" for its administration, and displaced the simplicity and beauty of its New Testament purpose with the "design of baptism," which gave the whole world some of the most fearful doctrines that have blackened the pages of Christian history. So that the simple question confronts modern Christianity concerning this great ordinance, shall we follow New Testament baptism or "the modes of baptism" which we have inherited from the city of the Cæsars? See pages 149, 150.

#### **The Greeks Not as the Romans.**

This is no guess work or theory, but matter of history well known and easily verified. With the Greek Catholic church it has been quite different. They through the centuries have held to immersion as the one original form, and their testimony at this point is more worthy than the testimony of Rome—especially as Rome *confessedly* and boastfully changed the one original form to the

use of "other modes which will do as well." Some months ago I met a member of the Greek church—devout, spiritually minded, comparatively a young man, of ability and culture, a foreigner, but his nationality cannot now be recalled. He had graduated after the usual course from an American university, and was now a traveling salesman "to see the country and learn the language." Our conversation ran easily enough into experimental religion. As he told of his experience and membership in the church, I asked if he had been baptized when an infant. "Oh, certainly," he answered with feeling of pride. "How were you baptized?" I asked, and his answer was prompt and with evident emphasis, "I was baptized by *submersion*." "Why do you use that word—submersion?" I asked. His answer was earnest: "Because we do not want any mistake about it," and proceeded to explain how they did not want their "baptism misunderstood," and how his people cherished their "history of baptism" as against "the effrontery of Rome" in doing away with the original and creating new "modes for its administration."

### **The One Standard for All.**

But this question is of the New Testament and cannot be settled by Catholic authority, either Greek or Roman, or by conditions which have come down from them. They have created a Christianity which the world is repudiating, but

which is far removed from the New Testament. Many people today revolt from "The Church," and think they are revolting from Christ and the New Testament. This course is more common in the old country but is taking place also even in America. We must get back to our base and make our appeal to the New Testament with its ideals, and the one common standard in baptism as in other things. On one of the streets of Nashville there are four jewelry stores within as many blocks. In the window of each lies a small regulator. The passerby finds all four giving the same time to the minute and second, and knows there must be somewhere a common standard. The same would be true with a hundred regulators.

Baptism was neither the cause nor occasion for the division among Christians, but in the course of years it has become more deeply rooted in that division than perhaps any other one question, and is the most manifest signal of where they stand apart—their baptism serving as their colors and the banner of their belief. In this division of sentiment, or judgment, or opinion, there must be the one standard of appeal if order and oneness ever come from the confusion. As division came in departure from New Testament simplicity, so the easiest and surest return to union will be in returning to the New Testament pattern in belief and practice.

**The Right Purpose Essential.**

In this connection the New Testament *purpose of baptism* calls for special attention and emphasis. This is of fundamental importance and a large factor in the right adjustment of these vital and momentous questions. Departure from its simple purpose has been the most fruitful source of other errors and false views of baptism. The changes through the changing years at times have been fearful to contemplate, have well-nigh wrecked the great ordinance and completely wrenched it from the New Testament base and significance. What was its purpose at the first must be its purpose now, and like its spirit and form is essential to its integrity and its right observance. Missing the mark at this point will drive us far afield at almost every other point, and land us in total misunderstanding of the great ordinance, and oftentimes of even the great doctrines.

The prime purpose of baptism is *obedience to Christ*, an acknowledgment of his reign in the new life. The believer in being baptized puts on the Christ uniform and makes open avowal of his allegiance to the New King. This purpose is made first and basal because of the spirit of baptism—believing, obedient, worshipful. Its very heart beat is in the words: “What will thou have me to do?” It is direct obedience to Christ’s direct word, heart to heart and each one answering for himself in the great ordinance. The new



convert in the first glow of his new hope, if asked why he seeks baptism, will probably answer, either because he loves Christ and wants to obey him, or because Christ was baptized and he wants to follow him. This is simple, and as viewed by some of little consequence, but it is of far-reaching significance in expressing this foremost purpose of baptism—keeping Christ's commandments because we love him and because of loyalty to him as our Lord and Saviour.

#### **A Word in Conclusion.**

This first and essential purpose of the great ordinance leads easily to its further and larger meaning—its confession of faith, its wonderful figure and symbol, its monumental and memorial character, its outward expression and signet of the work of grace in the heart, and its drawing the line between the old life and the new. For one reason or another men may fail to discern its beauty and meaning, and miss its great power to show the gospel in symbol. But not so in the New Testament where its every mention indicates its exalted and essential place in the Christian system.

Our Lord, we may be sure, carried all this, so far as applying to him, into his baptism, and in his own glorious person made the occasion at the Jordan one of the most august scenes in his wonderful life. "Thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness"—doing the right thing, in the

right way, with the right spirit, and for the right purpose. Will this great question of baptism ever be settled? Will the breach in the Christian world ever be healed? Indifference to the question is a grievous answer, so also the spirit of strife, prejudice and pride of opinion. "When the Son of man cometh will he find faith on the earth"—faithfulness in keeping the ordinances of the Lord's house?

### III.

#### THE "ONE MILLION BAPTISMS."\*

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THE Baptists of the South are profoundly interested in the bold and commanding "Five-Year-Program," lately set out by the Baptists of the North. It appeals to me because of its simplicity, its comprehensiveness, its far-reaching practical worth, and its daring to count on the future. It is a worthy conception with the sweep and impulse of a mighty purpose. Its five objectives—1,000,000 baptisms, 5,000 new missionaries, \$2,000,000 increase in the funds of the Ministers and Missionaries Benefit Board, \$6,000,000 for education, an annual budget of \$6,000,000—all of them appeal to me as being distinct, yet co-ordinated and unified in one commanding purpose—a great task for a great people.

This word is prompted by the excellent editorial in *The Watchman-Examiner* of July 15. I, of course, make no issue with the able editor, as he speaks for himself and quotes from Dr. James M. Gray against the "insidious evil" of "counting numbers" and getting "padded membership in our churches." Indeed, I rather agree with them, if possible with added emphasis, for the whole business of counting is pernicious. It is a delu-

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\* *Watchman-Examiner*, New York, Aug. 12, 1915.

sion and a snare—as it has been carried on. It deserves severe and every possible rebuke from all sources.

But may I venture the question, Is there not another side, a large and loftier view of the 1,000,000 baptisms contemplated in the Five-Year-Program? It would be a grievous thing to let so great and grave a matter run to waste in empty discussion—literally “to play out” in peanuts and peanut vines. Why may not the great program bring in a new day and even set a new standard for counting? It would be a commendable reform, and is much needed. Surely it must be right to set figures in the plan and purpose, for comparison in results when the results come.

Can we avoid the bane and almost curse which comes from a wrong use of counting, and yet hold the good and inspiration of the commanding figures of a million new-born souls, expressing their new hope and resurrection experience by following the Lord in baptism—a baptized million following a baptized Saviour as their Lord and King? We need not “count chickens before they are hatched,” but surely we may busy ourselves in securing eggs worth while, seeing that they have a good setting, and then wait for the hatching. And, furthermore, in the New Testament period were not the early triumphs of the gospel expressed in terms of baptism? Three thousand baptisms at Pentecost and five thousand baptisms at a later date certainly meant glorious

triumphs for the cross! No other one word can say the thing quite so well as the word baptism, if only we use the word intelligently and hold the great ordinance in its broader, loftier and richer meaning.

### **Baptism Cannot Be Over-Emphasized.**

There is no danger of over-emphasizing the great and beautiful ordinance if only we adhere in thought and speech to the New Testament plan and pattern. Indeed, the ordinance of baptism cannot be over-emphasized so long as we count it the obedience of a saved person. For obedience, the keeping of God's laws and the living out his will among men, is the supreme service, as Saul the son of Kish learned to his undoing—better than sacrifice and burnt offering now as then, in baptism as in other things bearing the seal of high heaven.

This wonderful ordinance holds a commanding place in New Testament history. It won for John the name Baptizer. Christ followed him in baptizing more than John, though he baptized not, but his disciples. It was set midway of the great commission as glorified in the glory of the God-head and for all the evangelistic campaigns in the centuries to follow. In all the great evangelistic campaigns of the New Testament this ordinance was brought to the fore and delivered its charming message of resurrection power, as shown first in the resurrection of Jesus from the

new tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, and ever afterward in the spiritual resurrection of everyone who believes in Jesus, and tells by symbolic import as no words can tell both of the believer's union with Christ and also of the brotherhood of believers in him.

We have largely lost all that, for the baptismal note has been sadly missing from the evangelistic campaigns of the last quarter of a century. Even if it had been only the loss of a picture, it is a picture of marvelous didactic power, more powerful in many respects than even the spoken word. Whenever the great ordinances have been honored, rightly estimated, interpreted and used, there has been a corresponding power and blessing.

This 1,000,000 baptisms in the Five-Year-Program of the Baptists at the North—may we think of it as their effort to turn the tide that has been running so strong with them and us, and an effort on their part to give the great ordinance its rightful place, with its opportunity to say the things that it can say with such emphasis and that need to be said at this time and everywhere? For baptism and the Lord's Supper are powerful, not only in evangelistic appeal and efficiency, but powerful also in maintaining evangelical truth. If one thinks rightly according to their word he cannot go far astray concerning any of the matters counted worth while among evangelical Christians. They stand in their didactic emphasis for the very teaching that has given our peo-

ple rank and distinction among other evangelical denominations.

In *Christian Union Relative to Baptist Churches*, a book lately published, I have ventured the following word concerning this very matter :

“Baptism was not at the first either the cause or occasion of division, but Christendom will not be reunited until this great ordinance, so full of wonderful and didactic meaning, has its rightful adjustment and is accorded New Testament position in modern Christianity. There is need for fresh study of the ordinances in their relation to Christian history, doctrine, experience and life as set forth in the New Testament. And this more than we dream, perhaps, may bring a return to primitive Christianity and so prove the highway to Christian union. It is a wonderful story these ordinances tell—Baptism and the Memorial Supper—if only they be allowed to speak their words untrammelled and unembarrassed. There is scarcely a fundamental doctrine in the whole Christian system that does not get didactic emphasis with illumination and power in one or both of these ordinances.”

#### **The Baptisms Fundamental.**

From my point of view, perhaps from the point of view of our people generally, there is a high and commanding sense in which the 1,000,000 baptisms may serve as the undergirding and

guarantee of the other four items in the program, tremendous as they are. One thing is certain, all the energies of heart and mind, all the wise planning and directing methods essential to securing the 1,000,000 baptisms, will be essential also for bringing in the other four or any one of them. It may not have the first place in importance, though I would not say that, yet it does hold the first place as its logical place. There we must start and there we shall make our highway to success. Those who made the program were thinking logically, and those who make a success of the program will find their logical starting place in evangelizing, which must, of course, go before baptizing, whether of one or one million.

The 1,000,000 baptisms, then, as it stands in the program, will demand of us as a people that we be evangelical in doctrine and evangelistic in spirit, purpose, method and effort—taking heed unto ourselves and unto our doctrine, that we may save both ourselves and them that hear us. This is the demand of the hour, and the program committee has set it forward with tremendous weight and energy as underlying all else with this plea for 1,000,000 baptisms. It means that pastors must be evangelistic in preaching, that churches must be evangelistic in planning and effort, that individual Christians must be evangelistic in life and personal effort, that the saved of the Lord must themselves save others. It means that our schools and colleges must be evangelistic, evangelistic centers where men and women are born



unto God, that teachers in our schools, that presidents of colleges and universities must be men of God, evangelical and evangelistic in winning men to Christ and to his likeness in character and service.

This will be a new day in Zion; rather a return to the old days with the fresh power of new times. I can remember when it was said as a matter of common report that when the class at Brown University reached the senior year and came under the teaching of the great Wayland a revival was almost inevitable. Our own James P. Boyce, of South Carolina, found the Lord, as I have understood, in the leadership of this master among college men, was led to Christ in the classroom by a university president, and afterward through successive years wrought wonders among Southern Baptists.

This is a noble example worthy of all imitation, justifies and gives emphasis to the committee's work whether in making or carrying out their program. Brown University as an evangelistic center would be a commanding and thrilling spectacle, a powerful example to all our schools and colleges throughout the country, both North and South. This would make easy the \$6,000,000 for education, and other millions would follow.

One million baptisms surely enough, and in the full meaning of the word, will go far toward a successful and triumphant consummation of the program in fullness. I have ventured to write

these things out of my heart as a salutation to my brethren at the North. Their work will mean a better church life and membership, will mean a larger, holier and more practical use of the ordinances than we have hitherto given them. It gets back on the base lines of New Testament life, sets first things first, and the rest is sure to follow.

#### IV.

### "THE GREATEST OF ALL EASTER PICTURES;" OR, THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS AS SEEN IN BAPTISM.\*

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VIEWED as symbol, sign or picture, or simple ceremonial service, baptism makes a powerful plea and apologetic for the Cross and the Risen Christ. Like the cross itself, the beautiful ordinance is a paradox, representing at once defeat and triumph, death and resurrection—two pictures in one. "As oft as ye eat this bread and drink this cup," as oft also as ye baptize, "ye do show the Lord's death till he come."

This article gives in outline the substance of the lesson we had on "Easter Sunday" in my class—an Adult Bible Class in the Sunday school of the First Baptist church, Nashville, Tenn. The title in part and largely the thought were borrowed from a unique and remarkably fine sermon preached by Dr. Howard Lee Jones, president now of Coker College, but then pastor of Citadel Square Baptist church, Charleston, S. C. The sermon was published at the time in the *Baptist Courier*, but recently re-published by the Sunday School Board, with a collection of

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\* *Western Recorder*, Louisville, Ky., July 29, 1915.

articles in a small book called "Christian Union Relative to Baptist Churches." I care nothing for Easter, am averse to it as a calendar day in the "church year." The title, however, is attractive, the conception is beautiful and impressive, deserving to be perpetuated and passed around.

The regular Uniform Lesson for that morning was, "The Rebuke from Samuel and the Rejection of Saul for His Failure to Carry Out the Word of the Lord," emphasizing *obedience as* the supreme service. This great lesson in the regular course was not set aside for the special lesson, but was emphasized by being made the background of the picture. For baptism, whatever else it may have or teach, is primarily an act of obedience which Christ requires of those who love him—the obedience of the saved man in honor of his Saviour. And in baptism, as in other things, to obey is better than sacrifice and all burnt offering.

1. This picture of baptism has for *its frame* the environment in which it is administered. The great original was in the Jordan, and the august occasion of the baptism of Jesus. The frame is not the picture itself, but may add much to mar or to set out its beauty and significance. Some of the most beautiful pictures in my memory are baptismal scenes—in baptistries of more or less attractiveness, in beautiful streams of running water, in the pool out in the open woodland—all aiming to copy as near as may be the great original in spirit, form and purpose.

The masterpieces of art in their originals are kept for the most part in the great art galleries of the world, but copies of them are carried almost broadcast. We demand precision in the reproduction whatever its frame, being sure always that we have the picture—an immersion in water with the best possible environment.

2. A picture requires a *good light*, with right reflection, to be seen in its real power of touch and beauty. This is imperative, or the mightiest pieces of art count for nothing. There must be a right eye and a right light, or nothing is seen. The light of the open heavens was upon the original of our picture and the occasion was made glorious in the Father's presence and approval.

The glory of God has been upon every right baptism to this day, and in a great sense sufficient to awaken awe, reverence and worship. Administered into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, this simple ceremony becomes sublime as an act of worship, is glorified in the glory of the Godhead. This far-off copy of the original is ablaze with heavenly splendor—if only we have eyes to see and a heart to respond to its touch.

I recall a baptism late one afternoon. It was in a beautiful stream and the sun hung low in the western sky. The rays fell upon the water where the preacher stood and was so reflected, that from my position the whole scene was transfigured into a sheen of sunlit splendor—beautiful indeed, and remindful of the Jordan. We are buried with

Christ in baptism, that like as he was raised from the dead by the *Glory of the Father*, so we also being risen with him should walk in newness of life.

Moreover, light from the Scriptures as the more sure word of prophecy is absolutely needful for a right study and interpretation of this wonderful picture. In an art gallery one carries a catalogue as his guide, and before this picture the Bible is your only guide. A good woman called at my study on one occasion, much disturbed and even distressed about her baptism, with serious and almost painful misgiving about what she had received in infancy as baptism. As she led on in the conversation, I ventured to ask, "But, in reading the Scriptures, what do you do with those passages which tell of baptism?" Her answer was very prompt and serious: "Oh, I skip them!" The reply was significant and told a sad story of a soul in struggle and doubt as to personal duty.

If you really want to see this picture in its true and wonderful meaning, let the light of the Word of God shine upon it in fullness. That will settle all questions and give this New Testament ordinance the place of rank and distinction which it should hold among those who follow our Lord.

3. But the chief charm of a picture as an element of power and commanding hold on public attention is, after all, its *subject and substance*. This, indeed, is what makes the picture, whether of imaginative creation, or of some real event or

person. A poor piece of art may yet be a great picture in its power to hold and stir the human heart, if only it represents some commanding historic character, or some deed of heroic daring, or some achievement that has startled the world and awakened a glad song in the history of human events.

Here baptism, this simple New Testament service, comes to its full as a picture of the burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Oh, that wonderful word, if only its mighty meaning be gotten—"We are buried with him in baptism, *wherein also we are risen with him* through the faith of the operation of God, *who hath raised him from the dead.*"

This is the event which baptism as a picture puts before our very eyes, as the mightiest and most triumphant event in human history, not indeed on canvas, however charming that might be, but in simple, beautiful, powerful action. Here, the new tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, empty of its holy treasure, is laid bare before our eyes—even the resurrection event—and we are asked again and again, "Come, see the place where the Lord lay."

And yet, baptism, however wonderful it is, needs supplementing as a picture and finds its supplement in the companion picture of the Lord's Supper. There are four elements to be presented concerning Christ; namely, his death, his burial, his resurrection, his resurrection life. The Lord's Supper shows his death and risen life, baptism his burial and resurrection—each a paradox and

a picture of double meaning. Dr. Sanday, of the Church of England, in his Commentary on Romans, says strikingly and beautifully: "Baptism corresponds to the three acts of Christ's atonement; namely, Immersion equals death; Submersion equals burial, or the ratification of death; Emergence equals resurrection."

This, moreover, is the only picture, indeed the only symbol in all art or nature, of his resurrection from the grave. Change the form of the great ordinance, and its meaning has gone. The master paintings in the art galleries of the world *express in their form* the thought and meaning of the artist. Change the form of the picture in color, or shading, or shape, and you destroy the picture.

Herein is the drawing power of the baptismal picture, showing in one act how Christ died for our sins and was raised again for our justification, and now reigns as the risen Christ. One may know nothing of art, but he will call that a great picture which makes him laugh or weep, or moves his heart to rapturous joy. He may not know why, but the spell of the picture is on him. The language of the new-born soul is, "See, here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized," wanting to walk in the will and the way of his Lord, and to do the things that he has commanded.

I once heard a Christian man who did not believe in immersion admonish his good wife, who was expressing the wish to see a baptism:



"Don't go near there, for if you do, you will surely want to go down in that pool." How little he realized the deep philosophy he was expressing of Christian experience and life! The pull of the picture is the measure of its power; its appeal to the new heart for a new life is its unchangeable testimony of pathos and power for the cross and the risen Christ.

4. This picture of the resurrection of Jesus has one element in a marked way, that I venture to call *the heroic, the daring*, such as you can seldom find in art. The world's great pictures of Christ have their elements of power, but can hardly be said to show the heroic. The Sistine Madonna subdues us with the appeal of the quiet, beautiful, dignified face, the transfiguration scene has a mighty appeal in its heavenly splendor and glory, the descent from the cross almost breaks the heart as one looks on it, but none of these carry the elements of the heroic and the daring.

But baptism is wonderful in what I want to call the unerring accuracy of its word and the dauntlessness of its testimony and sign-making power. It shows in living form before a gain-saying and materialistic world, nothing daunted, the resurrection of Jesus, the spiritual resurrection of the believer, the final resurrection at the last day. These are the things which perhaps are the severest tests of faith, and yet baptism never once wavers in setting them forth in strong and beautiful pictorial power. Its word at all times is the word of triumph and of unquestioning cer-

tainty—like the old fashion guide-post that stands at the crossing of the roads and points its way, whether by day or night, whether in storm or sunshine.

This is the heroic, the daring, in this picture. How it does appeal to us and strengthen our faith in the risen Christ and awaken afresh our hope of the coming triumph over death and the grave. The glory of the past and the greater glory of the future center here to awaken our song of rejoicing. This is the surpassing beauty and power of the picture—standing by itself among pictures so simple, and yet so sublime, in its meaning and message.

5. Its *custody* is in the hands of those who love our Lord—a baptized people following a baptized Saviour. They are its custodians for his sake. With jealous care the keeper watches the great art galleries of the world for the protection of the art treasures of the world. One may go in and see to his delight, but he must first leave on the outside whatever in any way might injure or mar the great pictures.

In my book, "Our Church Life," the following paragraph occurs in the chapter (page 81) on the Church and its Ordinances:

"No one surely would enter a great cathedral and mar the beauty of its finish or spoil the pictures on its walls. But what of God's building, and what of these mighty pictures which he holds up before the world? To spoil baptism by perversion in any way, is like spoiling the new tomb

in the garden ; the disfiguring of the Lord's Supper by misrepresentation is almost like disfiguring the cross on which the Prince of Glory died, or in some way marring or even mocking that awful tragedy which has been the wonder of the world for two thousand years. And yet these great ordinances are sometimes so changed and disfigured that there is no resemblance to burial or the empty tomb, no resemblance either to the cross or to the atonement which came in the shedding of blood as the purchase price of redemption."

This should concern us deeply. It is our high obligation and loyalty to our Lord, to preserve these great pictures in their spirit, form and purpose. To have in our keeping, such pictures gives renown and glory to our trust, and is a challenge to our faithfulness. We dare not delegate this trust to another, but count our responsibility for their keeping, as individual Christians and churches, our joy and crown of rejoicing.

Their keeping as committed to us is our highest honor, and almost our strongest word for the cross and the Risen Christ. Had not Christ come and taught, there would be no Christianity ; had not Christ died on the cross for sin and salvation, there would be no church with its baptism and supper ; had not Christ risen from the dead, there would be no Christendom.

## V.

### BAPTISM AND THE WONDERS OF PENTECOST.\*

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“Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. . . Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayer.”—Acts 2: 38, 41, 42.

PENTECOST was a signal day, the consummation of historic movements and a new start in God’s grace for human redemption. So gracious and glorious were its wonders that the very name, losing almost its glory in Hebrew history, became the synonym and symbol in Christian history for the demonstration and power of the Spirit. In the climax of the day’s wonders the baptismal ceremony is brought to the front, and then at the close of the day made to tell the magnitude of its achievements. For the ordinance to have place at all in such environment was remarkable, but to have such mention and use marks its commanding place in the Christian system.

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\* *The Convention Teacher*, Nashville, Tenn., January, 1916.

The memory of Pentecost and its wonders of grace, wherever it stirs the soul of Christian people, should not fail to crown this simple Christian rite with distinction and honor. It shares in the renown of that day as an essential part of the wonderful service, and must be now of the same importance, nature and meaning. Its meaning then and now is largely a meaning of message, rather than of mystic efficacy or conveyor of grace. We have been so consumed in our discussion of what baptism may or may not do for man, we have largely overlooked its powerful word in symbol for God in his scheme of grace, for Christ in his atonement for sin, and for the evangelical faith set out in the New Testament and held largely in common by all Christian people.

#### **Among the Antecedents of Pentecost.**

Baptism was not a product of Pentecost, not something new introduced then for the first time. As an ordinance it had been appointed beforehand as part of the equipment. It came to the front with commanding ease, and served its purpose when the new condition broke with startling suddenness upon the little band in their season of prayer. This was the disciples' first mention of the ordinance, and their first public service also since they were commissioned to the colossal task of world conquest. This fact was a new emphasis for baptism and magnified its place among the antecedents of Pentecost.

These antecedents were history, and baptism had been one of the most conspicuous factors. It had its rise with the ministry of John, whom God sent to baptize and whose baptism had its center and crown of distinction in his baptizing Jesus in the Jordan. Multitudes had flocked to John's baptism, as a baptism from heaven and not of men, and were immersed in symbol of their repentance and remission of sins. With the emphasis of intervening events the ordinance had come to its place of command in the commission, and as an institution in the new system was well known by the disciples as part of their trust, during the days of their assembling with one accord for prayer—waiting for the coming of the promise.

This day was their new day. They had been under the ministry of Jesus, had seen him die on the cross and learned its new meaning, had seen his resurrection power and something of its glory, had come through those forty days of remarkable training—the risen Christ meanwhile coming and going among them and giving commandments through the Holy Spirit—had finally seen him ascend into heaven to take his place at the right hand of the Majesty on high for the fulfillment of his word. What a company they were, as they waited with their commission unused for making disciples, baptizing and teaching—but ready for use when they were in the sweep and joy of the heavenly power newly come.

**Repentance First and Then Baptism.**

This was the stated order, the one an experience of the heart Godward, the other an act of ceremonial obedience as its sign and symbol. "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ"—was the commanding word to meet the crucial emergency in the storm-like sweep of Pentecost. It was a new emphasis for the greatness of the ordinance, while the ordinance itself took on a deeper and even richer meaning. It showed baptism a personal obligation preceded by a personal experience, a personal privilege and joy for such as have a new heart, and declaration of personal allegiance and loyalty to Jesus, having died on the cross, but now risen from the dead and at the right hand of God as the Messiah of Israel and the Prince of Glory. It was a great hour in preaching the gospel, a new honor for the ordinance, and set a new standard for evangelizing the world.

It is not known by whom the apostle was baptized, or just how he came to his exalted and ripened view of its ceremonial beauty and power. He knew of repentance both by instruction and from bitter experience, had large share in the antecedents in which baptism came to Pentecost in the fullness and ripeness of its meaning, and withal "spoke as the Spirit gave him utterance." So when the climax came in a kind of spiritual cyclone, he was ready with his word in masterful composure, and set baptism over against repent-

ance—an external ceremony to serve the noble purpose of expressing the deep things of the renewed heart.

In a certain sense it was a new day in preaching, for there was new power and larger opportunity, but no change of relation between spiritual conditions and their outward expression in symbolic form. Repentance is of the heart, is toward God, and means that the sinner who repents is the sinner already saved by grace through faith—with baptism to follow, not to complete his salvation, but to give ceremonial expression to the mighty changes which have taken place in the heart and in which one becomes a child of God.

#### **Regeneration, Repentance and Faith.**

These are great words and heart experiences. They precede baptism, and yet add to its significance and distinction. Though standing essentially in the order here named, regeneration, repentance and faith in Christ are coëxistent, like the movement of spokes in a wheel, and are inseparable terms in the process of being saved. They must be considered in a group, whether as words or heart-exercises—not synonymous but synchronous, and presuppose each other. Salvation, the more comprehensive term, includes all of them, or may be expressed by either one taken alone—so that one born of God is saved, as one repenting of sin is saved, or one believing in Christ as Saviour is saved. What these words stand for



must not be confused with conviction for sin which precedes, or with obedience in baptism which follows, each being essential in its own sphere and function in the fullness of Christian experience and life.

The driveways to a bridge—one approaching and the other leading away—would not be confused either with one another or with the bridge itself. The fruit of the tree is not the tree; there is a difference between the fountain and its outflowing stream, and a distinction between salvation and the “things which accompany salvation.” And the apostle in his earnest appeal for repentance and baptism was but matching the upheaval of the heart with the outer expression in simple but wonderful ceremony, and shows almost a startling view of the ordinance which the Lord had commanded, in its symbolic import and power.

Pentecost brought the first fruitage of the commission, working out, under the stately movements of the day, the rounded and completed fullness of its meaning—making disciples, baptizing and teaching. But the modern theory would curtail or set it aside, at least in part. They pray for a return of Pentecost, but seem to want Pentecost not as it was, but as it may be fashioned to suit modern views and customs. What need now, they say, for an external ordinance, “a mere form of religion,” when the spiritual power is so great, and the mighty Spirit himself is sweeping the heart like a tornado? Not so, however, with

the great apostle as leader in Christian conquest and himself in the full swing of the Spirit's power and guiding. For then as now and now as then, the inner experience needs the outer expression; the spiritual, even at its ripest and fullest, will yet call for the external in religion, and will give power to "the form of godliness"—the standard and ideal of New Testament symbols.

### **Repentance, Remission of Sin, and Then Baptism.**

The following distinction may be observed, so far as we may venture in definition where everything is overwhelmingly great, and glorious beyond human thought. Regeneration is being born of God, repentance is the turning of the heart Godward in sorrow for sin and in seeking forgiveness, remission of sins is God's gracious act in the sinner's behalf, and one of the wonders of redemption. This word—this amazing word, remission of sin—tells of something done in the heavenly court, as the governor's pardon issues from the executive office of state. It is the exercise of God's mercy in which he "abundantly pardons" and is in answer to the sinner's prayer through faith in the atoning blood. Conspicuous as coming only through Christ in the shedding of blood, remission of sins is one of the glories of grace, and it becomes an experience in the sinner's heart, an experience of grace, when he receives the glad news from heaven through God's Spirit bearing witness with his Spirit.

This must be counted one of the wonders of Pentecost, and yet baptism, the simple Christian rite, has its place and relation to the heavenly transaction; gives it public declaration in symbolic form, is God's own chosen form, so to speak, for its publication among men. Surely baptism came into company and environment of great honor on that day of wonders. Forthwith, simply as matter of speech, it became one of the great words of the New Testament and in subsequent Christian literature. And when we get back of the verbal frame work to the meaning and relation of the words, the significance is even greater. It has been sometimes overdone, sometimes painfully misplaced, but is always of commanding import.

The Hebrew system was passing away, as the stars fail before the rising sun. In the new order had come a simple rite, but charged with Christian thought and purpose. What had been given as an ordinance is seen at Pentecost to be also a ceremony of the Christian system, having the authority of an ordinance and the power of ceremonial expression. Baptism came as illustration and now gave fresh emphasis to the need and value of ceremonial service, and as a constant lesson of obedience in the things commanded.

**"Baptized for the Remission of Sins."**

*For* in the sense not of cause but of sequence and indicating the declarative character of bap-

tism and its wonderful symbolic import. If one were sent to prison for crime, there could be no confusion as to which came first, the crime or the punishment. So with baptism *for* remission—repentance and remission being the cause and baptism the sequence. Though an immersion in water, it does not wash away sin, and though an act of obedience, it does not secure the remission of sin. It is the obedience of a saved person, shows in noble way his new relation to God, declares his allegiance to Christ as Saviour, and expresses his new hope in him as one raised from the dead.

We come, therefore, to baptism through Christ, and not to Christ through baptism. Remission is the cause of baptism and not baptism the cause of remission. It is an exalted privilege, and glorious in its purpose, not only making public God's gracious pardon, but symbolizing its cause in the death and resurrection of Jesus, "who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification."

As a ceremonial service, the great ordinance marks the heroic in a man's faith, and often awakens songs of rejoicing. Like repentance, it is a paradox—tells in the one act not only of death and burial, but also of resurrection to a new life of joy and service. In repentance, often when tears of sorrow for sin flow down the face, the face itself is all radiant from a sense of God's forgiving grace, like the glory of the sun shining in the dew of the morning. "Repentance is a

word of ten letters and every letter a groan of the heart; a word of ten letters, and every letter a new doxology as a shout of triumphant joy."

### **Miracles—Evangelizing—Baptizing.**

This was the order of that day of wonders—miracles, evangelizing, baptizing. And about three thousand souls were added to the company of a hundred and twenty. That is the trophy of Pentecost, as if the commission, as yet but recent, had like a flower burst forth all at once in full bloom. The day closed, but the sun set on a new order of things, with baptism having a new renown in the new system. The vast multitude, every one for himself, wore the new badge of distinction and honor, being baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. "And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine, and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and prayers."

The disciples were equal to the new emergency. They had come into a larger experience, augmented in spiritual power, increased in numbers, and having a wider circle of service. They emerged from the upper room the same, and yet not the same, for Pentecost, with all its wonders, seems not to have added any new structural elements to what they already had in their organized character—only the new and larger life. The mission and glory of their task had of a sudden loomed large on the horizon.

"The breaking of bread" (as usually understood) refers to the memorial supper of our Lord—the tragic companion ordinance with baptism, but like its companion not a creation or product of Pentecost. Sacred already in the memory of the upper room, it forthwith became operative in the larger sphere, and was adequate for the larger needs which this day of wonders had brought in. It must have had strange meaning and pathos for those who came for the first time to its ceremonial ministry. They would learn, however, its marvelous story of suffering and atonement in the shedding of blood—even the blood of the Lamb shed for many for the remission of sins. These ordinances not new at Pentecost—not an afterthought—were of the original plan, and now served their function as that plan unfolded in purpose and aim.

#### **In Simplicity and Working Efficiency.**

"We do not know how much of ecclesiastical organization existed before the day of Pentecost when the one hundred and twenty were still assembled. Soon a great local church was a reality in Jerusalem, with deacons and elders besides the apostles." But the record will justify the further word that the results of Pentecost, wonderful in themselves, were yet *something added to something*. We must not confuse or minify what was there with what was added. The glory of the one must not obscure the glory of the other. One

went before, the other came after, and they wrought in conjunction to make Pentecost the exceptional day in Christian history.

The company of one hundred and twenty was sufficient in organized and orderly way to hold meetings of prayer with one accord, to handle and dispose of vital problems among themselves, and to set things in order for the coming of the Holy Spirit. While his coming in suddenness and stately power brought in new and larger life, there was no disorder or confusion, and no displacing of things already centered and fixed in the order as it was, but all marked by simplicity and efficiency as in the New Testament churches which came later.

There was of course development, rapid and powerful, with the incoming of the power from on high. The disciples were baptized in the Holy Spirit. There was the mystic transforming—if the word may be ventured—of the company into a body, the organization into an organism, with baptism and the supper remaining, and having organic power to reproduce itself in fulfillment of its mission. The apostle himself, typical of the changes which had come, was as a man made over and a preacher of surpassing power. The sermon, too, so unique in structure, substance and effect, was a mighty factor in the day's service, and a type for those who would have a ministry of converting and conquering power. But all this, inexpressibly great and glorious, was built

on what was there, had its foundation in the remarkable company of the upper room, its sub-foundation in the history which had gone before.

### **Set in the Churches for Teaching.**

These ordinances then—baptism and the supper—had been factors in the Lord's life, and came to their place in his process of building. They were of his thought when setting his church to its mission, and when after his resurrection he promised enduement of power from on high. They shared in what Pentecost meant, served each in its turn and function, and then remained as fixtures and permanent equipment in the church—in what is undervalued in being called the local church. They are woven into its fabric and structure, essential if not to its life, yet certainly to the force and fullness of its mission—for the cultivation of the church in the interest of the kingdom. Their ministry is largely a ministry of teaching, while the church itself is set for education in Christian truth. It may be called Christ's saving and educational agency, and is perhaps the greatest educational movement and organized propaganda in the world's history. These ordinances are large factors in its process of education, for efficiency in the didactic function of the commission, and for instruction in the things commanded by our Lord and in things fundamental to his own mission and purpose in dying on the cross for human redemption.



They create fine atmosphere for teaching and have didactic power in their appeal to the heart, when in figure and symbol they present subjects which stir the soul in its richest emotions. In homely illustration, the ordinances may be called the blackboard paraphernalia of the church—more fittingly, glorious pictures on its walls—to augment its efficiency in its exalted mission of teaching. But speaking more in accord with their greatness, baptism and the supper in their teaching power, are among God's chosen means to make the church more fit as a plan for serving him, and more effective as an instrument and organized center for the expression and furtherance of his kingdom among men.

### **Pentecost and the Present.**

Making disciples—baptizing them—teaching them, “with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.” That is the connecting word which reaches through the intervening centuries, as our hope and joy. It shows God's gracious work and purpose in the local church, and himself the chief factor in its process of growth whether at Pentecost or now. One may plant, another water, but increase must come from him.

Any adequate review of Pentecost and its wonders must include the church in its organic life, and its ordinances in their larger and richer serv-

ice. And any study of the ordinances worth while and commensurate will surely bring within the field of our thinking the power and glory of that far-off day. The cry more or less prevalent against "externalities in religion," against "mere forms and shadows," has nothing in common with Pentecost, and means only harm to evangelical truth and to the efficiency of even spiritual forces.

The Mississippi River, its water overflowing and sweeping large sections of the country with ruin, is power running riot without form; the same noble river is form without power, when flowing at low ebb with sandbars, shoals and snags appearing along its great length and endangering craft of every kind; but with its banks and mighty bed filled to the full, bearing the nation's commerce to the sea, the great river shows us in noble figure "the form of godliness" with the power thereof. This is our basal need, and infinite forces await our call, if we are to stand and withstand in the conflict for truth and righteousness, to see Christ and his cause triumphant.

## VI.

### RELATION OF THE ORDINANCES.\*

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BAPTISM and the Supper—the Lord's baptism and the Lord's supper—appeal to us because they are his, both in themselves and in the order of their function and service. They are of his thought and heart. He *put himself into them* in a way to stir the deepest emotion of the soul—with his own hand and use he set them in his original plan, and wrought them into his building process. They are embedded in the very heart of New Testament life and literature, and can scarcely be touched without touching our Lord at the point of his love and authority—tear them and you shed his blood afresh, honor them in remembrance of him, and you honor him as King and Saviour. "As oft as ye eat this bread and drink this cup," as oft also as ye baptize, "ye do show the Lord's death till he come."

Religious forms which God has appointed, whether law, ordinance, ceremony, symbol, or even memorial, are intended for the expression of spiritual life. "The form of godliness" is for the outflow of godliness; with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, but with the mouth, in the form of speech, confession is made unto salvation. This is the great base line for "law and

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\* *Baptist Courier*, Greenville, S. C., Oct. 28, 1915.

order" in the kingdom of God, and throughout his moral government. As a principle of authority and reign, it is imperative and inevitable—as much so as the physical law in the physical domain, and our largest usefulness and happiness will be found in its observance. The law of gravitation is very inconvenient when we wish to lift a heavy weight, is fatal if we walk out of a fifth story window, and yet without this very law life is impossible, and it may serve to make our burdens lighter, and to contribute to our uplift in many and noble ways.

People sometimes chafe under the restrictions of law and form, forgetful that in these may flow the most devout spiritual life, that in these we may sound forth the most rapturous praises to God for the riches of his grace in Christ Jesus. For this large and fundamental reason, "In keeping his commandments there is great reward." The Hebrew system abounded in forms of worship and service—in the New Testament system, however, all is simplicity with the appeal to love and loyalty. But there is the same great principle, imperative and inevitable with the believer, for expressing his new spiritual life in form and ceremony—baptism at the beginning marking a new life from the dead, the supper frequently repeated through the years, symbolizing dependence on Christ for the upbuilding and enrichment of that life, but each ordinance in its order and to serve its own high ends, to the honor and glory of Christ.

In noble and exalted sense, therefore, baptism and the supper may be called the law and order of the gospel of grace, and are aglow with the Saviour's love in every fresh observance. They are of great rank as ordinance, ceremony, symbol and memorial in Christian service. They could not be more commanding in character, more powerful and instructive in teaching, more tender and winsome in their appeal to our allegiance, loyalty and love. "*If ye love me*"—that is where all else centers and is settled—"If ye love me, keep my commandments." "If a man love me he will keep my words." Obedience is the deepest and most powerful impulse of love. "The love of Christ constraineth," whether to the stake in heroic testimony of self-surrender, or to his service in the furtherance of the gospel, or to keeping his ordinances unspotted and without blemish in their integrity and order.

On the day of Pentecost and the days immediately following, these two ordinances—emblems of grace and testimonials of love—are seen in operation and in their relative order and significance for the first time, each in its own ceremonial purpose, sphere and service. When the spiritual tide was at its height, baptism, the ceremony of intiation, takes its place with commanding ease, and they that gladly received the word were baptized, about three thousand souls. Then followed the Lord's Supper—an ordinance with the heart-beat of love, the memorial of his blood shed for many for the remission of sins, and in

remembrance of him as the bread of life, which would sustain their spiritual life through the succeeding years. "And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in the breaking of bread, and in prayers." Disjointed and misfit these ceremonies would mar the beauty of the system, but in their place and serving each in its function, they tell their symbolic story with charm and power.

No contention or question arose at Pentecost as to their priority, of either their order or importance. The old system was passing out, as a vesture folded up and laid aside, the new was coming in with new meaning and power. Tremendous energies were moving, but orderly and without confusion. There was already a fixed relation for baptism and the supper, inherent in their meaning; and following their history and appointment, they came in their natural course, evangelizing—the word gladly received; baptized, union with the disciples in doctrine and fellowship; breaking of bread and prayers; this was the relation of the ordinances, both between themselves, and with other phases of the new life and method which had come in.

The experience of grace at the floodtide of rich, spiritual life, found ample channel for its outflow, prepared in advance for the new day. And the disciples "continued daily with one accord in the temple . . . with gladness and singleness of heart; praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church

daily such as should be saved." There were efficiency and conquest in the new order. The Holy Spirit was at work in evangelizing and saving. The new form and ceremony in their fitness and significance, in their beauty and simplicity, were adequate for the symbolic import of the new life and the expression of the new power and joy. And in their observance the people bore testimony to their new alignment and allegiance to their new King.

Though baptism and the supper had come through antecedent history of distinction, yet this was their first working together in the new order, and put tremendous emphasis on their ceremonial value in church service and doctrinal efficiency. With such introduction, under circumstances so auspicious and commanding, one would expect that they would never be thought of in succeeding years except in the greatness and richness of their meaning. In a sense, and without disparagement of other things, they were the crowning glory of Pentecost, and everywhere the signal of triumph for the cross and the risen Christ. And yet it comes to pass that modern Christianity in some of its following count them less. It is a strain and stain upon our church life that, notwithstanding their wonderful record, their place of genuine power and pathos in the heart and history of our Lord, these ordinances are sometimes treated with indifference by his followers, and sometimes disarranged and displaced in their

sphere and order of service, as if we had forgotten Pentecost and the glory of its achievements.

The "Communion controversy," its protest against "close" and its clamor for "open" communion, means no good for these ordinances. It is clearly a factitious issue; has done untold harm in lowering New Testament standards and ideals, in breaking away from New Testament simplicity and order. It walks not in the way of Pentecost and of those early years. Its source is not in argument on principles but in personal preferences. It is led and governed by a sentiment which often chafes under form and order; is often more regardful of local conditions and social relations than for the law and love which reign in the kingdom of Christ and which manifest themselves in keeping his commandments.

A pastor was once besought by one of his members to invite her lady friend of another denomination to join with them in the approaching communion service of their church. He explained that it could not be done, except in violation of New Testament principles and practice. But she insisted that her friend was so exceptional in Christian character and walk he should make an exception in her case. "Oh, I see," said the pastor, "your friend has become so good and pious that she does not need to keep her Master's commandments, or observe his ordinances to do them as he said!" That is largely the issue; it sets up a new standard, and rivals the order



and methods of Pentecost in which the first victories of the cross were won.

Much of the confusion and disregard for the ordinances in their proper relation come from inadequate views of baptism and a failure to recognize its larger and richer meaning. Even some who believe in immersion as the form of baptism seem to count the immersion all there is of it, and see nothing beyond of its significance and commanding import. One writer, indeed, only recently expressed willingness to give up baptism for the sake of "Christian union." But how can we give up this ordinance, except we also give up the New Testament? We will need to tear baptism from the very heart of the commission, to remove it from this commanding word of the risen Lord, for it is imbedded midway between his "all authority" and his "Lo, I am with you." And besides all this, should we do away with baptism and decide to have no more of it, still if the New Testament be left, sooner or later some heroic, loyal soul would arise and demand baptism in obedience to Christ's word. But why trifle and tamper with what is commanded? "To obey is better than sacrifice," and obedience, the living out of God's law among men, is the supreme service.

Among professing Christians three phases of spirit and conduct may be found as attitudes toward the ordinances of the Lord's house. They test the character and mark where one stands concerning the kingdom of God. "It is largely a

matter of sentiment," but which sentiment? There is first *the spirit of indifference*. It counts both ordinances of no real value, and of little consequence for any purpose. It counts them "mere forms and rites" which can be done away at will, and makes no response or recognition of their appeal to either the conscience or heart. It is a deadly sentiment, if indeed it can be called a sentiment, this spirit of indifference, deadly to the finer traits of Christian character, and contributes largely to the letting down and general looseness now more or less prevalent in Christian belief and practice. It is first hurtful within, and then sends its evil influence abroad to work its mischief with others.

Then there is the *spirit of self-guidance*, which does not regard "form and order as essential" in the things commanded. It attempts to do things without doing them, displaces or abridges obedience with a supposed higher "spiritual life and broader Christian fellowship," is little concerned to *walk in the ways of the Lord*, and thinks form and ceremony narrow and restrictive of "the freer and more fraternal spirit." It "throws logic to the wind and follows the lead of love." Even the best men and women, perhaps these more than others, caught in this swirl of "good sentiment," will need constant care lest it degenerate into maudlin sentimentalism. It will mar the beauty and integrity of Christian character, and undermine its compactness and strength. This is one of the saddest and most common evils

of the day. It will brook no objection, will hear no argument, but rushes on in its own chosen way for the "broader things," and is a law unto itself. It cannot be other than evil, and evil continually, and is largely responsible for breaking away from New Testament ideals and standards.

There is finally *the spirit of obedience* concerning the way of God and in what he wants done. This is the most exalted attitude possible in human hearts and lives, is the spirit indeed of those who wait and serve in the heavenly courts. It is the most pressing need of the day, pressing need all the while; and there are those who strive for its high standard, who make God's ways their ways, his Word the man of their counsel and the lamp to their feet. It does not discriminate or choose between things where God has spoken. As one succeeds here he succeeds throughout the whole course of Christian ministries, his failure here will undermine and mar all else. This also is sentiment; but sentiment, however fervent and joyous, will not suffice except when made strong in sound principles, in right policy of conduct, and in heroic purpose of loyalty in doing the things commanded.

This gives emphasis to what was said at the first of this article, concerning God's law, ordinances, ceremonies, symbols and memorials in their form and order. In these the obedient spirit has its expression in service, in royal conduct, and oftentimes with rapturous joy. There is a

fellowship of believers in baptism, the fellowship of obedience and service to their King, a fellowship which precedes and should regulate fellowship in the communion service. In these ordinances, as memorials of his grace, Christ is honored in their larger meaning, and as they are kept in the form and order as they came from him. They are the heroic, triumphant signals of his victory, and stand for his achievement in human redemption. Even now, in every observance of their simple but beautiful ceremonial service, he is crowned King of kings and Lord of lords,—a momentous occasion it becomes with individual life and with the church assembled in holy service.

## VII.

### “TWO MEMORIALS WITH ONE MEAN- ING.”\*

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BAPTISM and the Lord's Supper as the two great ordinances of the New Testament hold their place in the gospel system as symbols and ceremonies. As ordinances they were commanded, and appeal to our spirit of obedience; as symbols they appeal to our belief and stand for mighty events, partly historic and partly yet to be, being memorial and monumental, prophetic and didactic; as ceremonies they are outward expressions of the experience of grace which one has in Christ Jesus, telling of death to sin and new life in him, of union with Christ and union also of all who believe on him for the saving of their souls.

In the cities throughout the South there are many monuments of the tragic war between the States—many memorials but all with one meaning. These monuments differ in material, in their form and pattern, in their inscriptions, in representing the different phases of that heroic strife, but they have one meaning in their testimony for honor of the soldier who fought by land and by sea, and especially in commemorating that four

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\* *Christian Index*, Atlanta, Ga., Aug. 19, 1915.

years' struggle as a mighty upheaval in our nation's life and the bloody war in the history of men. That stand for honor's sake, and home defense will never be forgotten—especially cannot be denied as history—so long as these monuments shall endure. They stand as evidence—silent witnesses like the stars but with no uncertain voice—with evidential power and value to the student of history.

In "Christian Union Relative to Baptist Churches," a book recently published, I make the following statement in behalf of these great ordinances (page 8) :

"Baptism was not at the first either the cause or occasion of division, but Christendom will not be reunited until this great ordinance, so full of wonderful and didactic meaning, has its rightful adjustment and is accorded New Testament position in modern Christianity. There is need for fresh study of the ordinances in their relation to Christian history, doctrine, experience and life, as set forth in the New Testament. And this more than we dream, perhaps, may bring a return to primitive Christianity and so prove the highway to Christian union. It is a wonderful story these ordinances tell—Baptism and the Memorial Supper, if only they be allowed to speak their words untrammelled and unembarrassed. There is scarcely a fundamental doctrine in the whole Christian system that does not get didactic emphasis with illumination and power in one or both of these ordinances."

A study of their doctrinal content with the New Testament as guide will confirm what has been written above, and will also show that these sacred and beautiful ordinances supplement each other in their symbolic import. They have the same memorial significance, yet each one emphasizing in its own way the two phases of the one event. We may think of them as the two sides of one sphere, which when placed together give us the completeness of thought and of figurative expression.

Taken together they bear testimony concerning Christ for his death, burial, resurrection and risen life. Baptism taken by itself speaks in marvelous way of his burial and resurrection, but says nothing except by inference of either his death or risen life; these are taken for granted, as death precedes burial, and resurrection would mean a consequent new life from the dead. This is strikingly illustrated by what Dr. Sanday of the Church of England has to say when commenting on the expression in Romans of being buried with Christ in baptism: Immersion equals death; submersion equals burial or the ratification of death; emergence equals resurrection.

On the other hand, the Memorial Supper says nothing except by inference of the burial and resurrection, but tells of his death by startling and painful figure, and gives great emphasis to his being alive again as risen from the dead. When taken together the two ordinances tell the whole story. Baptism stands for the new tomb,

first as holding the body of our Lord and then as being empty, while the Supper stands first for his death on the cross and then for his new life as he showed himself to his disciples by many infallible proofs, and that he shall come again in power and glory to raise from the dead those who are in their graves—memorials of the past and symbolic forecast for the future.

We need to emphasize more than we have done the *oneness of meaning* in these two ordinances, just as the many Confederate monuments throughout the South show the several phases of the great struggle, but all combine in one meaning of historic and didactic significance. As symbols these ordinances are unchangeable in form and meaning, and as witnesses they must tell the same thing through succeeding generations and centuries. Their meaning is the same now as at the first. They are two symbols with two voices but with one story and one significance. They cannot be hushed. They cannot be made to equivocate.

While they last and bear their witness the world cannot forget Calvary or the empty tomb in the garden, or the resurrection scenes which followed that first morning, culminating with the gathering on the mountain and his ascension to glory with the promise that he should come again. In celebrating these great events by these memorials we are celebrating our faith in the past and our faith also in the future. As they give assurances of the past they also give a guarantee for



the future that our hope shall not fail. In my book, "The Memorial Supper of Our Lord" (page 227), I have illustrated and emphasized these mighty things in the following language:

"One of the most brilliant of the hostile critics, who has gone furthest and deepest in the darkness of unbelief, has left his *creed of unbelief* as follows: 'The time will come when *no heart shall remember* that the Saviour suffered and died for the world. The last believer shall go down in darkness to his grave, and from that hour shall Golgotha vanish away from the earth, like the place where the garden of Eden lay.' Shall the words of this prophet come true? Shall Calvary be no more? Shall the fountain of blood cease to flow, or lose its blessed, satisfying power? Shall the Saviour and the Saviour's sufferings and death and glorious deliverance cease forever, even in the memory of men? Over against the dark prophecy of the hostile prophet and in answer to these foreboding questions, which come to the very heart of the world in its deepest needs, we will spread the Lord's Table next Sunday or the Sunday following, and on 'till he come.' There the white line, and underneath the simple bread and wine; there the eating and the drinking; and there again, as through many centuries ago, the blessed words are heard ever new and fresh, 'Do this in remembrance of me.'"

Having this oneness of meaning in their relation to Christian history, these great ordinances supplement each other also in their relation to

Christian doctrine, Christian experience, Christian life and activity. They are of the same didactic import and emphasis. Neither of them are essential to salvation and in no way administer to salvation, but are both for people already saved. Neither of them can give remission of sin or take away jointly the sins of the heart or the sins of life, but together they symbolize the atonement of Christ wherein we have remission, and have no meaning for those whose sins are not already forgiven. Neither of them can make the heart clean or new, yet both of them, whether separately or together, demand a new heart and a new life, proclaim one dead to sin and alive unto God, symbolize his union with Christ, as being crucified with him, yet nevertheless risen with him and now live in him.

In their oneness of meaning, therefore, they have high place in Christian apologetics as evidence for historic Christianity. As symbols and ceremonies they are powerful expressions of Christianity in its organic character. As ceremonial service and worship they minister to the spiritual life of those who walk in the ways of the Lord. In keeping his commandments there is great reward, not only in what comes to us, but in what we come to be in his worship and service.

## VIII.

### THE LORD'S SUPPER IN REVIVAL MEETINGS.\*

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"They continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine, and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."—Acts 2: 42.

"As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come."  
—I Cor. 11: 26.

"And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."—Acts 2: 47.

THE subject of this article is worthy at least of consideration, whether one wishes to follow it or not—The Lord's Supper in Revival Meetings as an evangelistic power. There is no reason for calling it Supper, except perhaps it holds in memory the sacred and almost tragic hour of its institution,—in the upper room at night forshadowing a darker day to follow. The name, however, has such a hold in Christian use and custom, that it can hardly be eliminated if we so desired, and fortunately, unlike some other names, it has no adverse significance.

The scriptures set as an undergirding for the subject, at least in an illustrative way, are col-

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\* *Western Recorder*, Louisville, Ky., Dec. 2, 1915.

lated here for concentration of sentiment and purpose. In a remarkable, almost startling way, this tragic ordinance came into immediate use, following the first baptismal triumph at Pentecost. It was not a product of that mighty occasion, but was ready at hand to serve with fitness and charm of pathos, in its appointed place and function. It shows in a striking way how thoroughly Christ had planned everything in advance when building his church and laying out its task and mission. It shows also how the two great ordinances, set side by side as companions in the gospel system, supplement each other, work out in wonderful fashion their respective purpose, and each essential in its sphere and function. We can readily see how the Lord's Supper, brought into the services following Pentecost, greatly increased the evangelistic power and efficiency,—made its contribution to the enrichment of the young church and augmented its spiritual power. Its message now as then is a message of the cross and its saving power.

The great statement from Paul's letter to the church at Corinth shows the preaching power of the ordinance and is set right in the heart of the evangelistic movement which continued from Pentecost and added daily to the church such as God was saving; and though written many years afterwards, the words are not out of place in those stirring days of gospel power, but rather give additional light and fervor. "As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do *show*

*the Lord's death till he come,"*—a fitting message then, a fitting message now, put into the very middle of revival meetings, a message at once of the cross and of coming triumph. It bespeaks its meaning now as then, in any other similar place and condition of church life, doctrinal fellowship, and of evangelistic service, where God is present in power to save and give increase to the planting and watering, in preaching the gospel of his grace.

In all this, but with some misgiving, I am venturing a heart-to-heart talk with my brethren about the use of this ceremonial service in evangelistic meetings and also the manner of its observance in the regular or stated seasons in their churches. The Lord's Supper had a deep hold on my heart from my boyhood, came early with me to a commanding place as the distinct memorial of our Lord's death and a mighty promise of his return. I grew up, thinking of it in this way, with never a thought of its having some sort of mysterious magic or sacramental grace.

In the country church where I was brought up, it was observed with decorum and marked *impressiveness*,—the Cave Run Baptist church, near Lexington Ky., where my father was pastor for a full decade, and after an absence of ten years with other churches returned and served until his death, and where as a youth of thirteen years I made profession of religion, united with the church and was baptized in a near-by pool. It was all so stately, so dignified,

and yet so full of heart power—this keeping of the Lord's Supper in a country church as the regular season came round. And—may I tell it,—my father never appeared quite so lofty, really great, to my boyish pride and imagination, as when he stood at "The Lord's Table" and ministered in the ordinance of the sanctuary. He and my mother, as remembered from my boyhood, like Zacharias and Elizabeth, "were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord."

Then, too, there was another factor which influenced my early thinking in the same general way. Near our country home there were great families and some of them noted men—Presbyterians of the best stamp, who greatly emphasized *preparing* for their quarterly communion season, also in a country church. Their talk in the social circle and at the family fireside of the coming service impressed my boyish heart with the greatness and sacredness of the holy ordinance. Those scenes are far away now in the receding years, but their memory lingers and even now brings a fresh sense of what the ordinance was to me then. I know now that my views of the memorial service were not too high in those early years, and in the main correct. And they have now come into intelligent conviction and govern my thinking concerning the great service. I shall never forget the feeling when I came the first time as pastor to minister in this ceremony, and that feeling has never left me, but comes back now

in large measure, when I worship with my brethren and receive the elements at the hands of another. It is a distinct remembrance with me of my Lord, both of his death and his promise to return.

This all may be too personal for public print, but it can hardly be exceptional, and will awaken a chord with many others. It is a great loss—how great, no one can tell—if pastors do not keep themselves and their people alive to the sentiment and meaning of this great ordinance as it comes around in the regular season—whether monthly, bi-monthly or quarterly. As this article contemplates special communion services, I would emphasize the stated seasons. These are not to be interfered with, should be counted of vital importance in church life, and nurtured as with the dew of heaven. It might be well—if I can venture the suggestion—to abridge the sermon; perhaps leave it off altogether, but surely by all means have it to fit and prepare for the memorial service. Even a good sermon may be the undoing of the occasion,—so also some slight or trivial affair.

The pastor is the man who sets the key in this high celebration. It is with him to see that repetition at regular intervals does not let the service down to the common place either with himself or his people—and happy the pastor who can hold the sacred service in thought and heart as it deserves and can make it minister to the spiritual refreshment and enrichment of his people. It

calls for the best that is in us to hold this memorial in meaning and manner of observance, as it was set by our Lord himself when committing it to us with the appealing words: "Do this in remembrance of me." "Like priest like people," here as in many other things, and the pastor will need to keep his own standard high in his thought and method of conducting the service.

But in addition to these stated services there may also be special observance of the ordinances in our revival meetings as occasion may offer or justify—but always with the greatest care and in the richness of its sentiment. In such service we will not get away from the New Testament standard and ideal, that the Lord's Supper, though great and commanding in its nature and purpose, is yet a *local church service*. Among Baptists no other body, however large and important, would think of undertaking its observance. In this the local church stands alone, having the privilege and obligation within itself, as in the New Testament period with the church at Jerusalem and the church of God at Corinth. A great and sacred trust this is, and must be kept in its integrity and purity of purpose and spirit, for its larger ministry and vital usefulness will depend largely on the method of its observance. This puts great honor and responsibility upon the local church, magnifying its character and service, and setting the ordinance to its high and holy ministry.



Dr. John E. White, now of Anderson, S. C., tells of a special communion service which he held in the Second Baptist church, Atlanta, during his pastorate. A great evangelistic meeting was in progress, with the tide of interest running high. As they came to the close of the week the question was raised about Saturday night—should they hold services or close up for that night as is usually done? In the quandary, the suggestion was made and adopted that on Saturday night the church would meet in a special communion service. The experiment proved a delightful experience, and the pastor counted it one of the finest meetings of the whole series, both for the evangelistic service and in its practical effects on the church itself. This illustrates what I am venturing to set forth in this writing, and seems to indicate, from my viewpoint, the promise of making the Supper an immense evangelistic power in a way altogether out of the ordinary.

What would be the effect, for example, if the Evangelistic Force of the Home Board, when holding simultaneous meetings in the several Baptist churches of some city, should request all of the Baptist churches to hold, each a special communion service on Saturday night instead of closing their doors, as is the usual custom? Or, as for that matter, in a concerted movement, with the pastor in charge and at his best, for any other time during the week? It would surely be something new and out of the ordinary in modern evangelism, though not unknown in apostolic

days. It would give tremendous emphasis to the church membership, would start an electric current of self-examination, would awaken a revival of church vows, and mark a line of separation between the unsaved and those professing salvation.

But much more than all that. It would bring into the evangelistic meeting with the emphasis of symbolic power, the very heart of the evangelistic message, namely, the atonement for sin through Christ's death on the cross—would set up afresh in the midst of the people the cross with its tragedy in which the Prince of Glory died for our sin. "This is my body—this is my blood shed for many for the remission of sins." These are the wonderful symbolic words of the memorial and show with great emphasis the only hope of salvation. "Ye do *show* the Lord's death till he come"—this is its message and teaching power in figure and symbol, in speaking, as baptism also speaks, the historic word, the evangelistic word, the didactic word and the prophetic word.

These two ordinances of the gospel system are largely of one meaning, similar in character and purpose, but supplemental in their teaching power. Their value and efficiency as teaching ordinances have hardly been fully recognized, and certainly not used so much as was their original intention for speeding the good news of salvation. Together they give their one lesson in symbolic import concerning the believer's experience of grace,—how he died to sin, was raised up again

in Christ Jesus, and now has his union with Christ and lives his risen life in him—washed in the blood of the Lamb. In this lies, at least in part, the might of their appeal and may be seen their subjective value in ever awakening afresh the glad song of redeeming grace.

Together also baptism and the Supper, in their supplemental teaching, present to the eye, and through the eye to the heart, the resurrection of Jesus. Baptism tells of the burial and resurrection, while the Supper tells of the death which went before and the resurrection life which came after. Baptism in figure and symbol tells of the new tomb, the great stone with Roman seal and Roman guard, and then with sudden turn tells in exultant triumph of the stone rolled away and the tomb left empty; while the Supper on the other hand tells in tragic way of the antecedent death which brought him to burial, and then has its message so clear and strong, of his victory in all that wonderful risen life with the empty sepulchre left behind, his ascension to glory and the promise of his return. "This is my body and my blood shed," is one voice heard in the Supper, but there is another equally strong and outspoken in every observance, "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forever more. Amen. And have the keys of hell and death."

It is this wonderful meaning in symbol, that gives baptism and the Supper this evangelistic power, and entitles them to a place in our evan-

gelistic services. The gospel in symbol is sometimes more powerful than the gospel in word. Symbols give no uncertain sound, never change in their form and meaning, and make their appeal to the eye; but the eye makes haste to tell the wonderful things which it has seen, and the story of the eye will often sweep the heart like the song of the angels. From this standpoint, the subject of this article is brought forward and offered to the brethren for such consideration as they may deem worthy. Christ appointed the ordinances, set them in their place and order, in part at least for their teaching power. It rests with us surely to give them their full sweep and swing in the evangelistic meeting, as elsewhere, for the fulfillment of their function and mission. For the past they are monumental and commemorative; for the present obligatory and didactic; for the future prophetic, and bear mighty testimony of mighty things to come—the very things most needed and with greatest emphasis in our evangelistic meetings.

## IX.

### MAGNIFYING THE LOCAL CHURCH.\*

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“Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”—Matt. 16: 17, 18.

. . . . .

“Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers—praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.”—Acts 2: 41, 42, 47.

THE dotted line separating these scriptures connect two of the most significant events in New Testament history—the transfiguration scene in the life of our Lord with Pentecost and the days immediately following. It connects Peter’s great confession with his great sermon in that day of signal wonders. In point of time it represents perhaps some eight or ten months—a short period, indeed, but full of startling events, marvelous and momentous in the history of human redemption.

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\* *The Baptist World*, Louisville, Ky., Dec. 16, 1915.

In that intervening period Christ had finished his walk among men, had instituted his perpetual memorial in the upper room at Jerusalem, had witnessed the betrayal of Judas, the fall and restoration of Peter, had been tried and condemned to be crucified, had died on the cross with many signals of the extraordinary, had been buried and after three days was raised from the dead by the power and glory of the Father, had spent forty days coming and going among the disciples with many infallible proofs and giving commandments through the Holy Spirit, had ascended into heaven and was at the right hand of God, had sent forth the Holy Spirit according to promise for the enduement of the disciples with power from on high, had witnessed the first preaching of the cross with the first manifestation of his resurrection power, and had seen his church come to its flower and fruitage in the first conquest of the gospel of his grace. There is nothing in all history comparable to this series of events in scope and power, in lofty dignity and triumphant sweep, in the glory of achievements and the richness and fullness of blessing, for saving the world and bringing in God's kingdom among men.

The words and events of Pentecost are not meant here to interpret what our Lord said to Peter concerning his church which he was then building—certainly not in the full. They are, however, wonderfully illustrative and taken together they are full of significance in magnifying the local church and in setting out the sources

of its power and the fullness of its mission. There is no thought here of raising the question of an invisible or universal church. Our people are not at one concerning that question and can afford to hold it in abeyance for the present purpose, while emphasis is given to the local church concerning which there is practical agreement.

At any rate, so far as this article is concerned, it has to do only with the local church as worthy of special consideration and in these times needing special emphasis. Its New Testament counterpart is found in the church at Jerusalem, in the church at Antioch, in the church of God at Corinth, and in other churches as they were multiplied in other cities, as the churches of Galatia and the churches of Asia, each in its individual capacity, life, character and responsibility. It is unfortunate that modern conditions and customs make it necessary to use the word local. The very word is an infringement upon the character, dignity and mission of the church—will unconsciously depreciate it in the public mind even when that is not intended by its use. The church of Christ was first one—as at Jerusalem—then more than one, then many, then increasing more and more as they multiplied in number and were augmented in power and efficiency.

In all this each church, even when described in the most wonderful way, preserved its own individuality in place and name, in character and mission. They were similar in fundamentals with many things in common, but each one separate

and distinct in itself. The church at Ephesus, for example, was "the church of God which he purchased with his own blood," whose leaders were chosen of the Holy Spirit—"the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." Following this basal idea, and starting at Jerusalem and Pentecost, the New Testament deals with the individual church, and everywhere gives emphasis to its character, history and work. Its reproofs and commendations alike are for individual churches—for individual churches even when they are grouped as with the seven churches of Asia. It was the one church at Corinth, typical of others, which was the temple of God, the place of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit when he came in fulfillment of the promise, that he should dwell in them and be with them. This, as one of its phases, is the glory of the local church, the very essence of its life and power.

There is much today tending to depreciate the local church that is not in keeping with this high standard and ideal of the New Testament. A loose and indefinite use of both words, kingdom and church, is an example of this. Some organization voted recently that "the church should maintain a lobby at Washington" as an offset to intermeddling by Roman Catholics in state affairs. A visiting preacher at Vanderbilt University was quite free in the charge that "the modern church has lost its religion." Much maudlin talk of this kind is now going on from what is counted authoritative sources, and the outside



world takes it up, not knowing what it means—and surely there can be no blame for not understanding what is meant—and charges the church with this or that, or clamors that the church should do such and such things. This use of the word church is all very hollow, without any meaning, and unlike anything in New Testament life and literature. Meanwhile, however, the mischief is being wrought, and the local church is set in the background, and its character and mission misunderstood and undervalued.

It is almost, if not quite, as bad from a vague use of the word kingdom that has become common in nearly all circles. This word—kingdom—is one of the great words of the language, and kingdom of God is possibly our greatest conception. And yet it is greatly marred by the use here referred to, while at the same time the local church itself is also set in depreciation by what seems some sort of adverse comparison. The word is high-sounding and catches the ear, but means nothing to the ordinary hearer. One suffers in his thinking in the misuse or loose use of really great words. It tends to impoverishment of thought, and both kingdom and local church have been let down in our thinking in this way—not perhaps always with the speaker but certainly with those who hear but do not understand what is meant. Kingdom, even the kingdom of God, and the local church have no points of rivalry, but much significance of meaning in their relation to each other. They are never con-

fused in the New Testament, but all the confusion grows out of our modern conditions and use of these words. Each has its separate meaning, its high function and commanding relation one to the other—both being of God, and set for his honor and for efficiency in the economy of his grace.

Without comparison or even reference to the kingdom, the purpose here is to magnify the local church as the most potential single factor for an efficient Christianity. Having been built by our Lord himself, and having its equipment and endowment for self-propagating power, it stands among the fundamental facts in the Christian system. This thought is prominent and large throughout all the pages of New Testament history, and shows the local church almost startling in its might and power. It brings forth after its kind as the vine in the vineyard or the gigantic oak in the forest. Those who make the best local church or churches, therefore, will make the best expression of the actual working of the kingdom of God, and do most for its efficient extension among men. Every great Christian enterprise in blessing the world at large and bringing in the kingdom of God with power, most likely had its root back in a local church or churches, and is nourished there in its life and enrichment.

The cause of Christ, indeed, in all its many, many phases, prospers as these local churches prosper and maintain their New Testament character and mission. Every diversion will tend

certainly to marring and weakness, and perhaps to its undoing. It has in custody the truth as it is in Christ Jesus, is entrusted with the keeping of the great ordinances in their integrity and purity, is charged with preaching the gospel of the kingdom among the nations of the earth, and is composed of men and women professing salvation through personal faith in the Lord Jesus. These and other things to match them, and all of lofty character, make these local churches unique in themselves, without parallel and incomparable among human organizations, while their members in life and service sit together in heavenly places. Surely they must be the mightiest forces and centers of power working among men for the honor and glory of him from whom they came. To hold membership within these churches is of high worth, of commanding responsibility, and our opportunity for serving God after his plan and purpose.

Someone has said that Christ talked much about the kingdom, but gave no concern about the church—meaning the local church. Surely this last cannot be true, for the local church is the only one he has on earth, and is of his own creation as an agency and method for working out his purpose on the mighty scale which he himself devised. His whole life work—living, teaching, dying, being raised from the dead and the wondrous things which followed—came to glorious consummation in the local church at Jerusalem—in a restricted way, to be sure, and yet

in a large, commanding and significant sense. And that church, with the churches which came after in the New Testament period, has been through all the succeeding centuries to this day the one exalted and commanding type of the local church and churches.

Surely nothing could give the local church more pronounced emphasis, or could show its distinction and worth in a more forcible way, or commend it more to the heart of those who love Christ, who know by blessed experience his saving grace, and who desire the triumph of his cause and in bringing of his kingdom.

A writer in England gives great emphasis to four fundamentals in the gospel system as follows: The deity of Jesus, the supremacy of the Scriptures, the empire of conscience, the sanctity of the single church. Each of these items was brought to the front and set aglow with heavenly light on the day of Pentecost and the days that followed. They stand or fall, live or die together. They are inseparable except for disaster, and mark the failure or triumph of the Redeemer's kingdom—the sanctity of the single church no less than the others.

Essential in themselves, these great facts and factors are essential to each other as interlocking forces, if they are to abide and triumph and bless the world—holding the everlasting truth of God in impregnable solidarity. No man can strike either one—the deity of Jesus, or the supremacy of the Scriptures, or the empire of conscience, or

the sanctity of the single church—without striking the other; cannot mar one without marring the other. To stand for one is to stand for all four—the deity of Jesus, the supremacy of the Scriptures, the empire of conscience, and the sanctity of the single church—each in its own sphere and proper relation. Inscribed on our banner as the banner of the cross, appealing to our love, loyalty and faithfulness, they point the way to victory and to further leading of captivity captive.

## X.

### LEFT HIS CHARIOT TO BE BAPTIZED.\*

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“As they went on their way, they came unto a certain water : and the eunuch saith, Behold, here is water ; what doth hinder me to be baptized ? And he commanded the chariot to stand still : and they both went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip ; and the eunuch saw him no more, for he went on his way rejoicing.”  
—Acts 8 : 36-39.

THE trusted official from the royal court of Ethiopia, having been converted while traveling the highway homeward, left his chariot for the distinguished service and ceremony of being baptized. It was in token of his new experience of grace, his pledge of allegiance and loyalty to his Saviour newly found, Jesus Christ the Lord. A happy convert this, as he met the first duty at the threshold of his new life—finding at the very start a new joy in walking the Lord’s appointed ways. For in this act he was following his Lord, whose baptism in the Jordan gave to the ordinance distinction and honor, and who set his signet for all who should come after ; “thus it cometh us to fulfill all righteousness.”

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\* *Biblical Recorder*, Raleigh, N. C., Oct. 27, 1915.

The present purpose is a study of this baptism administered in the halt of travel, but marking somewhat a typical baptism of the New Testament period, when historical Christianity was in the making and the gospel of the cross was winning its first victories. It should not fail to command attention, for though simply set in the frame-work of this remarkable incident, there is yet in its quiet observance an emphasis and marks of distinction all its own. To know this narrative aright, to set its lessons for our guide, and to follow its great lines of procedure, would go far toward solving many problems of modern Christianity.

#### **Baptism Set in the Perspective.**

This incident is our inspiration and example in winning the lost to the Saviour, shows the New Testament emphasis for the great ordinance, and its commanding place as a didactic ceremonial service.

What is told of Philip and the man of Ethiopia can hardly be more than an outline of what was said and done. There is, however, much of detail in the narrative, while the outline itself is wide of scope and large in perspective. And it may in no small degree be filled in with what is known of New Testament life and literature. But the baptism itself is so conspicuous and commanding in the record, so boldly set in the perspective, that it cannot be displaced or marred in its re-

lation to what is written, no matter how much may be even rightly read into the account. While not first either in the record or in importance, and though secondary, the baptismal occasion has its permanent place of prominence and standing in the incident, and as a ceremonial service was the crowning finish of what had gone before.

Had the narrative closed with the omission of our text, for example, all the Christian world to this day would be left wondering what became of the chariot ride. Preacher and hearer had met, teacher and pupil had come face to face, brought together under auspicious circumstances, and had matters for discussion of supreme moment. But what of the result? This is answered when in this ride they come to "a certain water," and the gracious work comes to its flower in the eunuch's request and Philip's response. The sequel is told in the baptism that followed. "They both went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him." They came up out of the water and were separated, each going his way, but after such a meeting as brings new joy to the human heart and awakens the songs which the angels sing. The official from Ethiopia, having put on Christ in baptism, went his way wearing the new badge of distinction and honor.

#### **Evangelizing and Conversion Preceding.**

Except for this condition going before, the baptism would be without meaning or even oc-



casation. It was the answer of a renewed conscience—a new man seeking an expression of his new life. This is the chief point of emphasis both in the narrative and throughout the New Testament concerning the great ordinance—first conversion or salvation through faith in Christ, and then baptism to follow as its public expression. There is nothing in the ordinance for the unsaved who seek through its means the pardon of sin, nothing for the infant who is incapable of believing, and no place for the sponsor who would stand for the child. It is for the believer only, as his personal act of privilege and responsibility. Repentance, faith, baptism—each of them is personal. Every one must give account unto God for himself.

Philip and the Ethiopian are a fine example of one winning one to Christ, and securing obedience to him in the things which he has commanded. It was a signal victory for the cross and the risen Christ; a striking illustration, too, of the commission in individual effort. Great principles are here at work, yielding rich returns with one meeting one, no less than with the thousands at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. And it came through processes, seemingly commonplace, but really signal and extraordinary. A great work had just been wrought in the city of Samaria, where the people believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, and “were baptized both men and women.”

**Preaching as They Rode in the Chariot.**

And now with that work finished, Philip was directed by the "angel of the Lord" in the way that goes down to Gaza, and by "the Spirit" to join himself to the passing chariot. A chance meeting, the world would say, but mighty superintending forces in evangelistic work were bringing preacher and seeker after truth face to face. What a chariot ride that was on the common highway of the country. What holy forces superintended and guided! What great and gracious themes with momentous issues, for thought, and heart-to-heart talk! The scripture read at the time by the nameless man from the royal court, was the starting point for Philip in preaching Jesus, the sacrificial Lamb of whom the prophet had written but who is now offered for sin, atonement and salvation.

There is no means of knowing, and imagination would hardly venture to lift the curtain on the scene, how far Philip went in telling the story of redemption through the cross, or how much the eunuch already knew of things which in the recent years had come to pass—of the wonderful life of our Lord and what followed, of the great Pentecost with its wonders and glorious results, of the new Cause now rising, triumphant everywhere and the occasion of common report, and even of the recent meeting which had brought great joy to the city of Samaria. The result, too, is meager in the telling, much more

meager than we could wish, but no doubt there was something much like what is omitted from the new version but contained in the old on grounds more or less justifiable with the earlier translators—"See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?—If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest—I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God—he commanded the chariot to stand still"—and the baptismal pool waited for the coming of the preacher and his distinguished candidate.

#### Baptism in the Act of Immersion.

"Both went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch and *he baptized him*"—and "they came up out of the water." The great ordinance is described here in detail, as to its physical act, more fully than any other case in the New Testament—resembling somewhat the account of the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan. In each case they went into the water, *were baptized*, came out of the water, the eunuch following the example of his Lord. In each case the *word*—baptized—tells what was done; the baptism of Jesus was an immersion in the river, the baptism of the eunuch was an immersion in "a certain water" which lay in the way to Gaza—the latter being more emphatic than the former, but both being so manifest as to make the act clear to every obedient heart seeking to walk in the way of the Lord and to follow his example.

Bishop Ellicott, one of the foremost of Greek expositors and of the Church of England, commenting on this text, says: "The Greek preposition might mean simply *unto* the water, but the universality of immersion in the practice of the early church supports the English Version."

Even John Calvin, the founder of Presbyterians, says of the passage: "Here we see how baptism was administered among the ancients for they immersed the whole body in water." And in his Institutes he says: "The word *baptize* signifies immerse, and it is certain that the rite of immersion was observed by the ancient church." Literally volumes have been filled with quotations of similar import taken from lexicons, commentaries, encyclopedias and other publications whose authors represent all denominations of Christians. Centuries have passed since the great Calvin spoke his word, but that word has been confirmed and given greater emphasis, if possible, by every succeeding generation since, and is the last strong word of modern scholarship with absolutely no room to gainsay its meaning.

### Concerning the Spiritual Meaning.

Learning and scholarship are in agreement with the common mind in reading the simple account of this baptismal service, and both alike see immersion in the significant act. But baptism is more than a physical act, though the physical *act of immersion is its essential form*, essential in its

observance and in symbolizing its larger and richer meaning. In its sphere and function baptism is essential, requires for its integrity proper spirit, form and purpose, and is given here great emphasis in its spiritual meaning as described in this incident of New Testament history. For this baptism in a marked and earnest way was sought from an obedient spirit—the spirit of conversion—and was observed in the spirit of obedience; the immersion of a saved man seeking to follow and honor his Saviour.

*“He baptized him,”* is the simple word, but the act in its symbol goes very far in what it says in behalf of the eunuch, and in telling us what was done, and what its wonderful meaning. There was immersion and emergence, burial and resurrection, typical of the change wrought in his heart—“buried therefore with Christ through baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life.” This is the greatness and glory of baptism, then and to this day. And the man honored in the royal family of Ethiopia found here a new honor and entered on his risen life in Christ Jesus.

#### **Fitting Sequel to the Beautiful Scene.**

It is not known whether others witnessed this baptismal ceremony, whether some, passing in the common travel, paused to look on this service, new and so out of the ordinary—an act admin-

istered in the name of high heaven. But surely it is not far-fetched to suppose that "the angel of the Lord" was in attendance as when he turned Philip into the road which leads down to Gaza, and that "the Spirit of the Lord" was present and guiding as when he directed Philip to join himself to the chariot. There had been in the earlier days something like this at the baptism in the Jordan. Then the heavens opened as if to let the angels witness the lowly yet august scene; and the Holy Spirit descended in dove-like form for a signal to John of the Messiahship of Jesus. The preacher and his charge were certainly walking the heavenly way.

The baptismal service ended, immediately "the Spirit of the Lord" caught away Philip for new fields of labor—the scene closing abruptly as it began, but not out of keeping with its lofty and dignified character throughout. Nothing is known of the man from Ethiopia, except what appears in the record, "of great authority under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was over all her treasure, who had come to Jerusalem to worship." Whether a proselyte of the Jewish faith or a Hebrew brought up in a foreign court, we have no means of knowing; but a devout worshiper, diligent in searching the Scriptures, and finding more than he had dreamed of.

He had met his "Lord even Jesus" in the way as he journeyed, as surely as did Saul of Tarsus, en route to Damascus. Without the midday vision of glory he had yet its blessing in richness

and fullness. Nothing is known of his return or what message he bore back to his home country. His chariot had driven into the scene unannounced, as the curtain was raised, and now passes out with no ado as the curtain falls. But only this word, "he went on his way rejoicing," and it is the last we hear of him,—nothing of his after life—homeward bound with a new joy in his heart, and a new song to make the world better and brighter.

"Oh, how happy are they,  
Who their Saviour obey,  
And have laid up their treasure above!  
Tongue can never express  
The sweet comfort and peace  
Of a soul in its earliest love."

## XI.

### BAPTISM OF SAUL OF TARSUS.\*

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EXCEPTING the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan, the baptism of Saul of Tarsus at Damascus was, perhaps, the most remarkable and startling single baptism in the whole course of Christian history. It was quiet enough, having nothing akin to the spectacular, nothing, so far as we know, which would attract public attention. He was baptized, probably, by Ananias, who went to him as the Lord's special messenger, and also probably in one of the rivers about which Naaman boasted when he dipped himself seven times in the Jordan: "Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel?" In our study, however, of the ordinance in this concrete case, as with his conversion, we must distinguish between what is remarkable and startling, and what is basal and essential in its meaning. For this baptism was as other baptisms, except, like his conversion again, the ordinary is set in the frame-work of the extraordinary. And yet, as a ceremonial service in the Christian system, the commanding importance of the ordinance was given tremendous emphasis by the character and history of the man, while baptism, itself, was

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\* *The Baptist Standard*, Dallas, Texas, Nov. 18, 1915.



greatly magnified and crowned with honor by the circumstances in which it came.

The joyous submission of Saul of Tarsus to this simple, though beautiful, Christian ordinance, the baptism of this Hebrew of the Hebrews, this Pharisee of the Pharisees, who started for Damascus from Jerusalem, breathing out threatening and slaughter against everything Christian, marked a revolution powerful and sudden in his own character and life, with a moral and religious upheaval in current events. The news must have come as a cyclone in at least two cities, friend or foe not knowing what it meant. The Power, which was thought dead and out of the way, had suddenly reappeared; and, with new fire, touched a magazine in which was gathered the best product of Hebrew culture and life—and there was an explosion, the undoing of the old to make way for the new.

#### **Marking Out the Boundary Line.**

“Immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales, and he received his sight forthwith, and arose and was baptized” Acts 9: 18. This is the entry in the record of his baptism which marked the boundary between the old life and the new—his life of persecuting Christians at Jerusalem and his life in Damascus of preaching Christ crucified, the Messiah of Israel and the Saviour of sinners—with only a few days intervening. Radical changes had been wrought within and without. There had been an exchange of

commissions—the authority from the high priest of hate and death being displaced by the commission from the Lord, his new King, who met him in the way.

That change is told by himself in his defense on the stairway at Jerusalem and before Agrippa at Cæsarea twenty-five or thirty years later, when his spiritual life had been deepened and seasoned by suffering and service, mellowed and enriched through new and larger experiences: “At mid-day, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining around about me, and them that journeyed with me. . . . I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest. . . . And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do. And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus”—“not disobedient to the heavenly vision.”

In this meeting, so simple and august, there had been an encounter, man with man, sinner with his Saviour, and Saul of Tarsus surrendered to “the Lord, even Jesus, who appeared to him in the way as he came”—surrendered in intellect and will, in his religion and life purpose. God

had touched him, and he was willing in the day of God's power—acquiesced, consented, purposed a new purpose, and chose a new course in life.

Saul of Tarsus henceforth was a new man in Christ Jesus—a sinner conquered, indeed, but a sinner saved. His baptism, as ceremonial service, followed at Damascus, as if to raise a banner at the point where conquest had been made—a signal of victory for his new King. Jerusalem and Damascus were only a few days apart literally, but in his experience the poles asunder. It marked a new life, a new fellowship, a new brotherhood, as recognized by Ananias, whom the Lord sent to Saul to “tell of the things appointed for him to do,” that he might receive his sight and the gift of the Holy Spirit to further fit and equip him for his new and special mission.

This gives the historical setting of his baptism and lays the base lines for the larger study of its fuller and richer meaning. Our present concern is not with his conversion in its overpowering greatness, but with his baptism, in which, as a ceremonial service, that conversion found its first expression, and he avowed for the first time his allegiance and loyalty to his new King as Lord and Saviour. That act, so simple, yet so heroic and morally sublime, is best seen in his own great utterances concerning it, for some of the noblest things left on record, as he came more and more into the larger service of life, were expression of what is meant when he was “buried with Christ in baptism,” in one of “the rivers of

Damascus." It was the glory of his life in struggle and conflict, and forecast the coming glory in the presence of his King.

#### **His Passion for Obedience.**

"And now, why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord (Acts 22: 16). This is his word when many years from the scene at Damascus, and long since had become the Apostle Paul, he now repeats the story of his baptism, standing on the stairway at Jerusalem with a mob clamorous for his death—not ashamed in such presence that he had been baptized, calling on the name of the Lord, even Jesus. The word so brief yet emphasized two vital and momentous points in the wonderful meaning of baptism as a ceremony, viz.: its calling to the new man for obedience to the new King, and its symbolic import, showing the twofold efficacy of the blood for the remission and the washing away of sin—even his sins, which always seemed greater to him than the sins of others. It magnified in glorious fashion the ceremonial beauty and significance of the great ordinance—symbolizing the fountain opened in the house of David to "Be of sin the *double* cure, Save from wrath and make me pure."

It is a dangerous perversion and painful letting down of this ceremony in the Christian system, to count it a purchase price in baptismal

remission, or any sort of efficiency in literal washing away of sin, or efficacious and operative in baptismal regeneration; as compared with its lofty symbolic intent to mark the highway of obedience for such as know the grace of God in the forgiveness of sin, and to emphasize the importance of serving God in the line of his commandments. Baptism, both as symbolism and obedience, would appeal mightily to Saul of Tarsus, having had the highest training as Hebrew of the Hebrews, to keep the Law of the Lord, to walk in his statute, and to observe his "ceremonies to do them."

All this, of course, assumed new and loftier meaning when, in the experience of the riches of mercy, he came into new relation with the Lord Jesus, and lived in the glorious gospel of the grace of God. Not less, but more obedient, the love of Christ meanwhile always constraining, and the joy of the Lord increasing his strength with the increase of service. He had a very passion for obedience, born of the mightiest power of the soul. "Not disobedient to the heavenly vision," was the key to his great life, at the first and on through all the succeeding years to the finish. His views of baptism, so lofty and strong, carried into the evangelical preaching of today, would create new evangelistic power and augment the efficiency of its appeal; would be a rock of defense for the evangelical faith, a living and powerful apologetic for the Cross and the risen Christ.

**His Baptism an Immersion.**

The word baptize signified that he was immersed when baptized at Damascus. This is confirmed in Romans 6: 3-4 and Colossians 2: 12; 3: 1, where he appeals to the ordinance in the form of immersion, and shows its symbolic import, its wonderful spiritual meaning and its practical worth in calling the believer to a godly life in Christ Jesus. Baptized into Christ—baptized into his death—buried with Christ in baptism—raised up also with him—with him to walk in newness of life, having the affections set on Christ at the right hand of God—these are his words and are of tremendous import. They show the believer's union with Christ—died with him—risen with him; crucified with Christ, nevertheless, they live in him. It shows also the believers' union with one another in a common experience of grace in Christ Jesus, and the outward bond and badge of their fellowship in the one baptism.

This is the far-reaching significance and power of the apostle's great word, and the meaning of his baptism is written in immersion as the form essential to observance. The spiritual finds expression in the physical and outward. It is the testimony of believers being in Christ and Christ in them the hope of glory. It gives emphasis to experiential grace, and to individual responsibility in observing the ordinance in its outward form—each one for himself. And the ordinance itself is exalted in the power and glory of its mes-

sage, being everywhere the emblem for the gospel of resurrection power; Christ's own chosen signal of his conquest over sin and death, and of how he brought life and immortality to light. This is its meaning, whether for Saul of Tarsus, for believers at Rome and Colossæ, to whom he was writing, or for all who should come after, even to our own times.

### **The Form Essential to Its Meaning.**

Dr. Plummer, a Presbyterian, says: "It is only when baptism is administered by immersion that its full significance is seen." Conybeare and Howson, of the Church of England, say: "This passage (in Romans) cannot be understood unless it be borne in mind that the primitive baptism was by immersion." Dr. William Sanday, also of the Church of England, and foremost among Greek expositors, says of this text: "Baptism expresses, symbolically, a series of acts corresponding to the redeeming acts of Christ; immersion equals death, submersion equals burial (or ratification of death); emergence equals resurrection." The emergence—lifting the person from his submersion—is not only a physical necessity, but is essential to the symbol and completes its symbolic import, showing Christ risen from the dead and the believer risen with him in the experience of grace.

The emblematic power of the ordinance is in its form; its power of utterance is in its form; its

very self is in its form—form which expresses wonderful meaning—the emblem of what grace has done and will do. It is surpassingly great in the uniqueness of its message; shows “how Christ died for our sins, was buried and rose the third day, according to the Scriptures.” As figure and symbol baptism has no message for “salvation by education,” or through “evolution of character,” or through “culture” in some high way. It speaks only of atonement—atonement through the blood of the everlasting covenant, for new birth and new heart by the Holy Spirit, and for becoming a new creature in Christ Jesus. This is its one word—the word which must not be broken, or weakened, or altered forever: “God has made him who knew no sin, to be made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” Wherever this emblem goes, this great truth for human redemption is set at the front as a message of grace.

### **His Baptism the Christ Uniform.**

The apostle, concerning his baptism, makes a bold change of figure, and, like the others, full of meaning. His baptism was his Christ uniform, which he wore to mark his alignment and allegiance. “Ye are all the children of God through faith in Christ. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ” (Gal. 3: 26-27). This is wonderful putting of words together, the expression of experience and salva-



tion, of sublime thinking and teaching, God's children—faith in Christ—baptized—putting on Christ by baptism—enough to overpower and confuse in thought, yet distinct and exalted in its meaning. Such setting of the ordinance shows its exceptional character and important service in Christian life, and gives fresh emphasis to the study of the baptism of Saul of Tarsus.

Its fundamental principle is clear and may be marked throughout the Scriptures. Faith in Christ is the means and method of becoming a child of God, baptism is the means and method for its public expression and for public alignment with the followers of Christ. It is a Christian service—a service for God's children, and worthy "the child of a King." So it was with Saul of Tarsus, so it must be with all who would follow him as he followed Christ. It is their obligation, only there should be no waiting for obligation; it is their privilege, the impulse of love, their joy to walk in the way their Lord went—the baptized Saviour of a baptized people. No others can wear its badge of honor, and it draws a line of demarcation between the children of God and those who walk the ways of the world.

It is the Christ uniform, and gives the believer a badge of distinction, and demands that he walk worthy of his calling and have his conversation as becometh the gospel of Christ. A uniform does not make a soldier, but marks him as to his allegiance and service, and becomes his outward bond of union and fellowship with all who have

walked in this way of the Lord—a common baptism with him and with all who know him as Lord in like obedience and wear this common uniform. It is a distinction for believers and for the brotherhood of believers. This was the apostle's honor, and so he counted it among Christians everywhere—the mark of the soldiers of the cross and its triumphant badge on every field.

### **The Word in Conclusion.**

There are those, however, who insist on the lower level, while deluding themselves that they walk the "higher heights" of spiritual experience and service. Born of God, they say, and with the new hope in their hearts, they have no need of baptism or church membership; that baptism, not being essential to salvation, has, therefore, no value or place in the walks of the kingdom—as if it were nothing to honor the Lord's ordinance, nothing to walk in his appointed way and in his method of grace. Not so with Saul of Tarsus, but in the glow and glory of his vision he was immediately baptized, joined himself to the disciples, and began to tell the good news of salvation.

Let us back, then, to our starting point, to the baptism of Saul of Tarsus at Damascus. Many years had intervened when he sent his lofty words to Rome and Colossæ, to Ephesus and the churches of Galatia. Since then he had gone far abroad with the gospel of grace, but all the while

his baptism at Damascus was a precious memory, giving strength and inspiration in its sublime lessons. He and others like minded and of kindred spirit, serving under the one banner of one King, had borne it into far-away cities and distant countries of the world.

But always and everywhere, the simple, beautiful ceremony which he observed at Damascus was the one baptism—the same in symbolic form, the same in lofty, obedient spirit, the same in its one great purpose of expressing in figure the achievements of grace—to glorify Christ and crown him King in the heart and life—the “one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.” This was the unbroken, unvarying testimony of Saul of Tarsus, from the day he met his Lord in the way to Damascus, until the end came, and he went home to receive his plaudit and his crown.

## XII.

### BAPTISM AND THE EVANGELICAL FAITH.\*

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“Those matters which have been fulfilled among us” (Luke 1: 1). “After that he had given commandment through the Holy Spirit unto the apostles whom he had chosen . . . appearing unto them by the space of forty days, and speaking the things concerning the kingdom of God” (Acts 1: 2, 3). “The faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3).

“Giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in you all.”—Eph. 4: 3-6.

THE term evangelical faith is sufficient for present purpose, though not uniform or definite in its general meaning and use. In some respects the words mark a base line of agreement between certain denominations, but they also set a line of division including some, excluding others. That base of agreement for the most part, as cardinal in the evangelical faith, is the doctrine of the

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\* *Alabama Baptist*, Birmingham, Ala., Dec. 1, 1915.

Lordship of Jesus and such other doctrines as it implies in New Testament faith and practice. With a foundation and scope as strong and safe as this, the term, though not of scriptural origin and also of comparatively recent date, should yet represent the best of modern Christian thought and life.

It is better, however, if we can, to get back to the New Testament, for even the evangelical faith would prove further division if followed out in definition, each one speaking for himself and each people speaking for themselves, as to what is evangelical. And in the last analysis we must come to the Scriptures for the final word, in belief and practice, and to the expression of inspired writers for a statement of evangelical truth to which we can commit ourselves. But to do this we must take account of the great ordinance of Christian baptism, which, however, is thought by some to be a disturbing element among the followers of our Lord, but which must have recognition and standing in the evangelical faith.

For the ordinance is inevitably and inseparably connected with the Lordship of Jesus, involving in its connection and didactic power his authority, his work of atonement and his very nature itself. Baptism at its very heart means the deity of Jesus, his giving himself on the cross for sin, and his resurrection from the tomb for human redemption—all of which is written large in New Testament life and literature. And if baptism were removed from all the creeds of Christendom

by mutual consent in "the interest of a broader fellowship," we still must face it in the New Testament, with a bold and commanding position in the life, practice and teaching of the apostles and of our Lord himself. We cannot be loyal to him and set it aside. And whatever else may be true, we may be sure that his prayer for oneness of believers, and the apostle's great word for the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, did not contemplate its abolishment or its marring or the minifying of things commanded.

It is, however, significant, that evangelical Christians, excepting individuals more or less numerous in the several denominations, have shown no purpose or wish to eliminate baptism from their belief and practice. They differ as to its nature, purpose and meaning, varying all the way from symbol to a means of salvation, but it holds prominent place in their formulas of belief, and not one of them would vote as a body to count is no longer an "institution of the church." This is worthy of emphasis, for baptism even in its perversion has historical value as testimony running back through the centuries for historic Christianity. There could be no false if there had not been the true; no counterfeit if there had not first been the genuine and original. But the nearer our views come to the New Testament view of baptism, in the simplicity of its spirit, form and purpose, the more valuable will be that testimony for evangelical truth, the greater also will be the honor for the people who resolutely and

loyally walk in the way of the Lord—a baptized people following a baptized Saviour, in the standard and ideal which he set at the Jordan; “Thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness.”

This is the meaning in part at least of the great scriptures at the head of this article for its direction and undergirding. The word faith has a twofold meaning in the New Testament—“Faith and the faith.” The first, faith in Christ which saves, the vital process of the soul in commitment of itself to him as Saviour—an experiential saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus. This is Paul’s “one faith” which unites to the “one Lord,” and expresses itself in the “one baptism” as an act of joyous obedience. It gives to believers oneness of saving experience, and is the basis of a common brotherhood in Christ, and of oneness of fellowship in him. And this faith in Christ readily passes on to larger things concerning him, merging itself into believing with the heart that God hath raised him from the dead and believing with the heart unto righteousness.

And thus out of faith comes the faith—things believed, more or less systematized, and at once the basis and expression of doctrinal character and life. There is no necessary conflict between life in Christ and doctrine concerning him, as there is no conflict between the fountain and its stream, between the tree and its fruit. This is the faith of the New Testament. It came to be the faith of the disciples and of succeeding generations through the process of teaching and learn-

ing. With the teacher it is doctrine then and now, but with the learner it becomes his faith—the things which he believes—as he incorporates the teaching into his own thought, character and life. And so the faith is propagated and projected. And the faith with the disciples becomes the faith with us, our having, of course, enrichment and spiritual power from personal knowledge of Christ and personal experience of his saving grace.

So the faith has its succession, somewhat even in the form of sound words, and with an unimpeachable and impregnable base, and is a better phrase for use than evangelical faith. What was surely believed among the disciples as things established, what they saw and heard with many infallible proofs, what they learned from Christ as he taught concerning the kingdom of God and gave commandments through the Holy Spirit, became for the disciples and succeeding generations, through due processes and in the fullness of its scope and sweep, “the faith once for all deliverance to the saints;” and in large measure is specified in Paul’s “seven unities,” with baptism included as a Christian institution.

In the “one baptism,” therefore, he not only gives the ordinance a place in the New Testament system of faith, but with the greatest significance he counts it among the Christian unities, in one of the noblest utterances in all his writings. He was not indulging in rhetoric and phrase-making, as someone had the hardihood to suggest, but



spoke from his own rich experience as in Romans 6: 3, 4, was in harmony with the remarkable origin and history of the ordinance, and under inspiration was thinking God's thoughts after him and speaking the word God would have him speak. One body—one Spirit—one hope of your calling—one Lord—one faith—one baptism—one God, even the Father of all—this is august company for the word baptism with what some call its homely method, and even more for the great ordinance with its lofty thought and commanding character. So much so, indeed, that some expositors are embarrassed and puzzled in their efforts to interpret the text without assigning too large a place and honor to a "mere externality in religion."

But why should they balk at this? The place of baptism in this beautiful summary, though exalted and commanding, is no greater than its place in the commission where it is closely and significantly related to the three Persons of the Godhead, even as Paul connects it here with the one Spirit, the one Lord, the one God—even Father of all. And nothing greater, moreover, than its place with the wonders of Pentecost, in some respects the most signal day in Christian history, where baptism may be seen in practical service, fulfilling its ceremonial function and symbolizing the great evangelical truths of the gospel. And all this is fully matched, perhaps overmatched, in the concrete case, when on the august occasion Jesus came to John to be baptized of him in the

Jordan, and was immersed in the historic river—the heavens opening in its honor, the three Persons of the Godhead being present and sharing in the service, and the Father giving his approval before men and angels.

Having such history and prestige the great ordinance then came easily and by right to its place among the “seven unities,” was in full accord with them, taken separately or in unit, and shared with them in the fullness and richness of their meaning. It should be heralded as they are heralded, and like them make its appeal to a divided Christendom for “the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” We should accord it this distinction and honor in our thinking, and so gain a more adequate view of its symbolic character in the Christian system, and of its ceremonial worth in Christian experience and service. “The Scriptures must be allowed to say what they want to say,” in rating and giving rank to the ordinances of the Lord’s house. It is worth our while to learn how with open heart and mind to be at ease with the great words, the noble phrases and even the mysteries of the Scriptures, and with joyous willingness to follow where they lead.

The apostle in his “one baptism” was not, as this article is not, making plea for immersion as against “other modes of baptism.” For at that time there was no question of “other modes,” these having risen centuries later, according to the best authorities in modern scholarship and learning. But in the order and sweep of his

thought, the apostle was emphasizing the one baptism in the sense of the same baptism, common to all believers everywhere, and the one external symbol of their brotherhood and fellowship. Precisely, indeed, as they had the same faith in the one Lord, the common experience of grace through the one Spirit, the one hope of their calling, and the same glorious relation with the one God even the Father of all.

This was with him the one glorious bond of union for the brotherhood of believers, and the one baptism was the common badge or uniform of its distinction. On the other hand, however, this glorious view of baptism and this great emphasis of its spiritual meaning, manifestly could not change its physical restriction and requirement. For the ordinance, though larger in meaning than the physical act of baptism, cannot even in its loftiest conception be separated from that word or the word's meaning as immersion. This comes first and is basal to all else that may be said. Whether we think of baptism as ordinance, ceremonial service, institution of the Christian system, figure or symbol, monument or memorial, or whatever else, we must come back to this as the one form of the one baptism, essential always to its observance and right administration. The Bible itself in its wonderful character and content of meaning, like its ordinances, is first a piece of mechanical handiwork of type and print and binding—the physical containing the spiritual and making its expression possible. So the phys-

ical form of baptism is essential to its spiritual meaning.

Without this there can be no baptism, as there cannot be an immersion without immersion, and without this as our base we cannot interpret what it means. Even the "one baptism," in the glory of its company with the Christian unities, must, first of all, carry within itself the physical meaning of the word as the physical act of immersion—a physical act with spiritual meaning as with John and Jesus in their sublime but physical act of baptizing and being baptized in the Jordan. And so in the unities of Ephesians, as in Romans and Colossians, the apostle, in the sweep and raptness of his great experience, would count his baptism a burial and resurrection. Immersion and emergence make the one symbol of his having died with Christ and been raised up with him as a man risen from the dead—the emblem of the "one hope" of his calling in Christ Jesus.

The ordinance of baptism, moreover, as set out in the New Testament, requires and is large enough for both its physical act and spiritual meaning. The absence of either vitiates and sets it aside in its lofty character and purpose. Its teaching power for the most part is in its form, and it contributes largely through its form to the defense and propagation of the evangelical faith—nearly every one of the great doctrines of grace having illustration and emphasis by virtue of its symbolic power. And the Greek church never abandoned the form of immersion, but the Ro-

man Catholics, claiming the right to make the change, substituted first pouring and then sprinkling for immersion. This was the undoing of the ordinance so far as they were concerned, and with the going of the original form went also its spiritual meaning and beautiful symbolism. A fearful train of evils followed both in practice and doctrine. It was Rome's break with the faith of the apostles, and with New Testament simplicity, standards and ideals. Against this the contention ever since has been for baptism as it was, not for the form *per se*, but for the form as holding its great meaning and as essential to its observance. To have it as Christ left it is safer and more loyal.

This article is a plea for its larger, loftier character, and for its closer relation and better recognition in the evangelical faith. With this place and function which it has by Scripture right, and with its original form and didactic purpose, baptism would give greater emphasis to evangelical truth, would contribute to its evangelistic power, and become itself an evangel for "unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." It was not the cause or even the occasion at the first for dividing the followers of our Lord, but the great ordinance, beyond what we dare think, may yet be a future messenger for bringing them into the oneness for which he prayed, and for the enlargement and enrichment of the evangelical faith. Its mission has been great in the past, but may be even greater for the future.

Its monumental evidence for past achievements of grace has been glorious, but baptism has a further prophetic voice for the final and triumphant consummation. Symbols abound in nature, art and literature for death and immortality, but baptism, bolder and richer in its figure, goes further, and speaks its word for burial as symbol of defeat, but also for resurrection power and glory—the mightiest and most triumphant of all achievements. Its voice, as a song sung in joyous hope, is for the redeemed, washed in the blood of the lamb, with white robes and palms of victory. It is the foreword and foregleam of the great day, when “in the ages to come God shall show the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness toward us in Christ Jesus”—angels powers and principalities attending to do him honor and crown him Lord to the glory of God the Father.

### XIII.

#### WILL SPRINKLING DO AS WELL FOR BAPTISM? \*

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“Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in the Jordan. And straightway coming up out of the water he saw the heavens rent asunder.”—Mark 1: 9.

“Make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”—Matt. 28: 19.

“They both went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they came up out of the water the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip; and the eunuch saw him no more, for he went on his way rejoicing.”—Acts 8: 38, 39.

“All we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death. We were buried, therefore, with him through baptism into death” (Romans 6: 3, 4). . . . “Having been buried with him in baptism, wherein ye were also raised with him through faith in the working of God who raised him from the dead. . . . If then ye were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God.”—Col. 2: 12; 3: 1.

WILL something else—sprinkling, for example—answer as a substitute for baptism? Taking these scriptures in their plain meaning and in their oneness of emphasis for immersion as the

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\* *Baptist and Reflector*, Nashville, Tenn., Dec. 23, 1915.

prescribed form of baptism, will some "other mode" do as well? The question, though incongruous and well-nigh impossible as it may seem, must be treated with genuine courtesy and due consideration. For sprinkling is much honored as a "mode of baptism," and is largely followed with sincerity and devoutness. For example, the Westminster Confession of Faith, one of the most remarkable deliverances in Christian history, says: "Dipping of the person into water is not necessary; but baptism is rightly administered by pouring or sprinkling water upon the person."

Furthermore, the Roman Catholics throughout the world have for centuries maintained sprinkling as their "mode in the sacrament of baptism." And many, many thousands of people who honored our Lord, who blessed the world in their Christian character and service, have lived and died in the practice of sprinkling, counting it a suitable "mode" for administering the great ordinance. Many thousands today, their successors in belief, stand in the same practice and make the same claim.

All this, however worthy it may be of kindly consideration, does not in any wise change the issue, cannot answer the question which confronts us, can hardly be a legitimate factor in its settlement, and yet it adds to the gravity of the discussion and makes more urgent the demand for its righteous adjustment. The opinions and practices of others, however honored and influential, does not relieve one from personal obligation



either to know for himself or act for himself. The question is one of personal duty, as personal as eating and sleeping. It must be answered by the New Testament, and the New Testament is an open book in its pattern of belief and life. Everyone must give account for himself unto God,—in baptism as in every other Christian duty, now as well as in the judgment at the last great day. Baptism is a personal privilege, the answer of a good conscience. If others fail and come short in duty or privilege, that is no excuse for us. We must answer the question for ourselves—each one for himself—will sprinkling do as well for baptism as immersion?

This is not a question of mere form or “mode.” It goes deeper than that, much further back, and is of vital importance. It concerns the great ordinance in its whole nature and meaning. It makes an issue between “sprinkling as a mode of baptism” and the New Testament, which represents Christianity in the making and is the embodiment of what was required in those first years. The New Testament must be supreme in this matter, and we must not hesitate to follow where it leads. There may be difference of interpretation but not in the question of its supremacy in all matters of Christian belief and practice. Do we find sprinkling in the New Testament as baptism? That is the simplest form of the question and points the way for its settlement. It cannot be determined by personal preference or convenience, nor by what good people have done

in the past and are doing in the present, nor by what Roman Catholics may claim in the way of authority.

Baptism—the baptism for the followers of Christ—started with John the Baptist. God sent him to baptize. His baptism was an immersion, as shown by all the circumstances both physical and spiritual. The people came confessing their sins and were immersed. There was no sprinkling as a “mode” of baptism, and it cannot be substituted now as something which will do as well as that baptism which was from heaven and not of men.

Christ’s baptism as he set the example in the great ordinance, was an immersion. It had the approval of his Father, was magnified in solemn and august way by the Holy Spirit appearing in dove-like form, and had the additional emphasis of his own words: “Thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness.” Even were there many “modes” of baptism, surely the devout heart would choose that form in which our Lord was baptized. There is scarcely a difference of opinion among either learned scholars or the uneducated readers of the English Scriptures about the baptism of Jesus. Shall we follow him in his choice of immersion, or substitute sprinkling as something that will do as well?

The baptism which he commanded in the commission, so far as concerns the physical act, is an immersion, as shown by the meaning of the word, and has tremendous emphasis and the high-

est possible honor by its vital relation to the Person of the Godhead. That perhaps is the most august setting the great ordinance has throughout the Scriptures. The one word, baptizing, which always means immerse and is the only word ever used to name the ordinance—makes the form an act of immersion. It is a holy act of obedience, and of worship, and of glorifying the eternal Godhead. The keeping of it sacred and in its integrity even to its form, involves the sovereignty and authority of Jesus. Someone has said: "It is a heroic obedience to obey the laws of God, simply because they are God's laws and not because he has promised to reward the obedience of them." A true and noble sentiment, indeed, and yet it is loftier and nobler, when one, out of the fullness of his heart, puts love and loyalty into his obedience. This is the supreme service, and no word from Rome, even when followed by others however good and great, can undo the commission and displace immersion by sprinkling as a "mode of baptism which will do as well."

Philip's baptism of the man from Ethiopia was an immersion, the angel of the Lord and the Spirit of the Lord attending in the way which went down to Gaza. It was a simple roadside act in itself, as the high official left his chariot for the distinguished service of obeying his Lord and following him in baptism. And yet there was greatness in the act. It repeated so nearly the wonderful scene at the Jordan, it was in harmony with the august setting of the ordinance in the com-

mission, and stands as a commanding type of how baptism was administered in the New Testament period. Let any one read the simple story for himself: "They both went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they came up out of the water the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip"—will sprinkling do as well as matching this New Testament example, and can it meet the circumstances of the occasion and fill out the wonderful significance of its meaning in figure and symbol?

Furthermore, the baptism spoken of by Paul in Romans and Colossians, is manifestly an immersion as to its physical act, and symbolizes in a wonderful way burial and resurrection; first, the burial and resurrection of Jesus, then the believer's spiritual resurrection with Christ and his risen life in him, and then the final resurrection of the dead, when the end shall come and the Son of man shall speak the word for them to live again. Sprinkling has no word for these mighty events in the world's history already passed and yet to come, and would utterly destroy the spiritual meaning and symbolic import of the great ordinance.

In addition to all this, sprinkling and pouring, like infant baptism, their companion in origin but more direful in effects, are not once mentioned in the New Testament, either as baptism or as having any sort of connection with baptism. They are out of keeping and in many ways contravene its spirit and form, its express purpose and spir-

itual meaning. They cannot be traced in their history to Christ or his apostles in word or practice. We must set the New Testament aside if either sprinkling or pouring is to be followed for baptism instead of immersion. They had their origin as "mode of baptism" with Rome when Rome ruled the Christian world with a rod of iron, and were enforced by prison and sword and burning at the stake, until their practice with infant baptism made the darkest and bloodiest stain in the course of Christian history. From the imperial city they were injected into the cleanest and best the world ever saw, until the whole became almost the foulest of the foul.

They are our heritage from "the dark ages" and have been wrought into modern Christianity as a residue of those far-off times, and have been fastened on the Christian world of today. They came through Rome as substitutes for immersion, as "modes of baptism that will do as well," and Rome's decree has taken the place of the New Testament and set aside the authority of our Lord himself. Even when traced beyond Romanized Christianity, pouring and sprinkling lead not to Christ and his word, but come of pagan customs and conditions. This is all a matter of history, and can be easily verified, concerning pouring, and sprinkling, and the practice of baptizing infants. The course of history concerning these things cannot be undone, and they cannot be put in the place of New Testament baptism, whether as then decreed by Rome or as practiced now by

better people with better intent. An error in the hands and even hearts of good people is still error, as poison in the hands of a child is still poison, and will surely do its deadly work.

Pouring and sprinkling for baptism, though somewhat modified by modern conditions, will ever remain the mark of Romanism in its worst days. Their practice indicates almost inevitably historical connection with Rome, even when they are found among good people who have no sympathy with Rome but rather make vigorous protest against the Catholics. Indeed, Roman Catholics make the charge that "their baptism has been taken by Protestants" and incorporated—more properly retained—in Protestant systems of belief and practice. Whatever may be said of the charge, certain it is that historically among Protestants, pouring is of Rome, sprinkling is of Rome, infant baptism is of Rome—all came from the city of the Cæsars, and are of Roman thought and invention. They are not of the New Testament, are not of Christ, and have gone far afield of what he commanded and practiced in the way of Christian baptism. (See pp. 37-39.)

My book, *The Moral Dignity of Baptism* (pp. 220, 225) enforces this point in the following way:

"Indeed, Christ never used the word sprinkle for any purpose. He commanded baptism *but did not command sprinkling*. The two words cannot take the place of each other; they stand ever apart each in its own sphere, having its own

meaning and service. Sprinkling cannot be a 'mode of baptism,' as it cannot be a mode of immersion. . . . 'Sprinkling as a form of baptism,' (1) is not like the baptism of Jesus, (2) does not commemorate in picture his burial and resurrection, (3) cannot show in emblem the believer's union with his Lord in those mighty events of tragedy and triumph, (4) nor does sprinkling show the believer's being dead to sin and buried, nor his risen life in Christ, (5) nor can sprinkling foretoken in form the final resurrection. Nothing but immersion can fill this high office or give this exceptional service. Design or purpose is more important than form, and yet is inseparable from its form."

Without its form of immersion there can be no baptism, however much one may retain its proper spirit and exercise in himself good intentions. Those who practice sprinkling are most forward in speaking of the great ordinance as "mere rite," "mere ceremony," and some go so far as to call it "only a command." The reason is easy to see. Having abandoned the New Testament form of the ordinance, they have lost also the New Testament meaning, and failed to discern its exalted character. And so the great ordinance means little to them as they see it only in sprinkling. Its wonderful spiritual meaning, its symbolic beauty and didactic power so largely in its form, are not seen by them, for these things have no expression except in immersion. For this reason those who practice sprinkling also, more than

others, are ready with the word—"it makes no difference," "a little water will do as well as much," and so on to the end of minifying. They see no meaning in the ordinance, giving it but little concern, count "one mode as good as another," but always preferring to set aside immersion and substitute sprinkling. And so the New Testament baptism disappears so far as they are concerned.

But this question, so lightly disposed of by them, lies at the very heart of the question of Christian Union, so much talked of and so greatly desired. For baptism, while not at the first either the cause or occasion for division among Christians, has in later years become largely both cause and occasion for the division being continued. It is more deeply rooted than any other one doctrine of divergence, and marks the most pronounced and acute stage of separation. And yet there must be adjustment here in the matter of baptism if Christian Union is ever to be more than idle talk and sentimental dreaming. Our Lord prayed for oneness among those who are his, but surely he did not contemplate the setting aside of great matters of doctrine, and least of all would he have us disregard this great ordinance which he commanded and in which he promised his presence and blessing.

So sprinkling, viewed from any standpoint, is sadly inadequate as a mode of baptism, is unscriptural, of unsavory origin and invention, and a grievous divisive among the people of God. Over



against sprinkling stands immersion in a triumphant way, as the scriptural form of baptism with its wonderful history. Christ walked in that way, commanded us to follow his example, and there must be no substituting of something else as being just as good. Immersion alone, as the form of baptism, tells in figure and symbol the story of his burial and resurrection, and to set it aside is to hush its wonderful story of the empty sepulchre. Taken in conjunction baptism and the Memorial Supper, having been set together in the divine purpose and plan, tell of death and burial, of resurrection and the risen life, of defeat and disaster, but also of conquest and triumphant consummation.

They voice in symbolic form that wonderful word of our Lord spoken on Patmos; I am he that liveth, and was dead; behold I am alive for evermore, and have the keys of hell and of death. Surely this gives great meaning to these ceremonial rites, a meaning such as the world finds nowhere else in figure and symbol, such a meaning as sweeps the heart with music sweeter than the music of the spheres. *Herein Christ is preached*—in a way almost more powerfully than in words—Christ who died but is not dead, a Saviour who died but is not dead, a King who died but is not dead, the Lord who died but is not dead, the one unconquered conqueror who died but is not dead, having overthrown death and ascended on high, having the keys of hell and of death as the trophy of his conquest.

## XIV.

### THE VOICE OF CONSCIENCE IN BAPTISM.\*

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AS ONE of its characteristics baptism is a physical act with religious character and function, a "form of godliness" in the fullness of power, if held to its scriptural thought and purpose. Its physical act is in the form of immersion in water, its character the spirit of obedience and worship, its religious functions to serve God in the ways of his appointment. Some count the form of no consequence, and so miss the ordinance altogether; others count the form all there is of it—hold that baptism as immersion is sufficient—and so miss its larger ceremonial meaning and its richer symbolic import. Its form is essential to its observance and right administration, and is largely the expression of its lofty use in ceremony and symbol.

This beautiful Christian ordinance, with a record now of nearly twenty centuries, is a marked feature of New Testament life and history. And throughout it has the command and authority of our Lord, and is conspicuous for its symbolic emphasis of the doctrines of grace and for the power of its ceremonial testimony for things experienced

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\* *Baptist and Reflector*, Nashville, Tenn., Dec. 2, 1915.

in the heart. For baptism, according to the Scripture, is the figure of salvation through the resurrection of Jesus, and not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God. This unusual combination—God, conscience, baptism—puts baptism out of the ordinary, and sets it among things which are of surpassing greatness. As when given by our Lord a place of efficiency and vital relation to the Persons of the Godhead in the commission, or when assigned a place of distinction by the great apostle in his noble summary of the Christian unities—one body—one Spirit—one hope of your calling—one Lord—one faith—one baptism—one God, the Father of all.

It is scarcely to be wondered at, but rather a further testimony to the greatness of the ordinance, that from the first until now, some have set it out of its sphere and rightful service, or attributed to it more of efficacy than was right or true, or have otherwise missed its meaning or misread its message. Even at the first, as the gospel went abroad on its larger mission, there was need for apostolic correction, for some thought baptism could put away "the filth of the flesh," as if to magnify the cleansing power of its immersion, could cleanse the life of sin and eliminate from the flesh tendencies which are wrong and sometimes ruinous. And there are other more modern theories, but scarcely less unworthy, that have claimed for it a sort of magic power unto salvation, washing away or remission of

sins, or some ill-defined sacerdotal or sacramental grace.

But as an adequate offset to all this stands the New Testament simplicity of baptism with its standards and ideals. Having tremendous meaning and of great honor, it is yet restricted in its sphere and function—set for lofty mission and purpose, but incapable of doing or serving in others. Baptism has its prescribed form—an immersion in water as to the physical act, and serves its religious function in part at least as the answer of good conscience toward God. The ordinance is not itself the conscience, does not itself possess moral quality, but becomes its voice for the expression of its judgments in behalf of God, and in emphasis of his honor and right to rule. It is remarkable as a ceremonial service, and depends not on its environment but simply on the august character and significance of its message. It is the voice of conscience in baptism—an external physical act giving expression to the deepest, profoundest passion of the human soul. It means God's claim on the conscience and life—the conscience's answering the demand, making recognition of God, and avowing its purpose to walk in his statutes and serve him in the ordinances of his love.

Baptism cannot make the conscience pure, but simply serves as its voice, can take no stain of sin from the soul, cannot give a new heart or make us new creatures in Christ Jesus. But the good conscience is the conscience of a renewed heart

and marks a work of grace wrought within by the Spirit of God. It is conscience set right and trained in the principles and ways of righteousness. Otherwise one would not come to baptism at all, except through some delusion as to the saving power of the ordinance, or some evil purposes as with Simon Magus, whose heart was not right in the sight of God and who was baptized while still in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity. But in such cases it would be no baptism—even though an immersion—only a performance outwardly religious, but having no meaning and could easily become a solemn mockery and a dangerous sacrilege.

This may be counted an ideal too high, but surely it is of the New Testament standard, and worthy of our seeking and following. We need to discriminate both as to our conscience and as to what our conscience would have us do—all the more because of the divided sentiment and the inadequate views concerning the great ordinance. We should set ourselves to have the baptism which God intends and which Christ commanded—the right baptism by the New Testament standard in spirit, form and purpose, and making the answer of a good conscience unto God. Saul of Tarsus is an illustrious example of the conscience before and after conversion, and emphasizes the need of its being made right. He exercised himself in his unsaved condition, to have his conscience void of offense before God and men. He was self-centered, followed the “dictates of his

own conscience" both in worshiping the God of his fathers and in persecuting Christians unto death—followed his conscience, but his conscience was wrong and led him in the wrong way.

But after his conversion all this was changed. His conscience was converted, and trained in the way and service of Christ. He centered all in Christ not only for his salvation and hope, but for the government of his life. Christ's will and law became his will and law, from the time he met him in the way to Damascus. The love of Christ became the passion of his soul and the supreme law of his life—the one restraining and constraining principle and power. His was the "good conscience," and would voice itself for God in whatever way and manner occasion required—whether to be baptized or to give himself as a martyr for a martyr's crown. This is what a good conscience calls for no less now than then, and should mean as much with us as with the followers of our Lord in the far-off years. It is a supreme moment when the conscience, under the sway of God's grace, speaks its word for him; and if baptism be the voice of its expression it gives to the ordinance a standing and rank such as when the angels do his will.

We must not undervalue this because baptism is so often misunderstood and sometimes counted of little consequence. The voice of a good conscience is a voice to be heard and honored, whatever the medium of expression, and the medium of its communication assumes in a way the dis-

tion and glory of the mighty issues involved. God—conscience—baptism, can never be otherwise than of commanding nature and import. Conscience is often called, perhaps generally understood to be, the seat of authority in human character, and yet its dictates are not always obeyed—not even concerning baptism. Nearly everyone knows how it even clamors at times to be heard in other matters, yet its calls are set aside. Its voice is sometimes suppressed by the will in sheer willfulness, sometimes stifled by other passions of the soul, sometimes overpowered by the sweep and drive of bodily appetites and lusts, and sometimes set at naught by outside conditions and circumstances. But in every such case it is more or less the breakdown of man's moral quality, and the failure of conscience to have its voice heard in the moral realm of thought and life.

The plea of this article is for the right exercise of conscience, that it be true to God in baptism as in other matters, and command the life to his honor and service. For its call is sometimes set at naught, and sometimes the whole affair is counted of no value or consequence. God is not heard, the ordinances of his house are disregarded, or even belittled before men and angels. Why would not his word of rebuke to the unfaithful priest apply in this case, and with startling emphasis and meaning: “For them that honor me I will honor, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed?” For man in dealing with

his own conscience is often dealing with God, and stifling its voice may be stifling God's voice. The question of a man's baptism may become the point of issue between him and his God—for the conscience has only made God's demand and now awaits the man's answer.

The voice of conscience in baptism then, besides being a recognition of God, means also personal obligation and obedience. It gives great emphasis to that individual character in the service of God, which is everywhere manifest throughout the Scriptures—God dealing with man and man dealing with God face to face.

In the great ordinance man walks as if alone with God, his conscience making its call and his God awaiting his answer. One cannot be baptized or meet the obligation of baptism for another. There is no room for the sponsor in the Christian system, whether by parents or others. The sponsor, so conspicuous in some circles, is unknown in the New Testament or the Old. In baptism each one must answer for himself, precisely as he must repent and believe for himself. God regenerates by units and saves one by one. Conscience is tremendously individual, and its keeping cannot be either assumed by another or committed to another. This is true throughout the whole range of Christian experience and life, and the question of a man's being baptized cannot be an exception.

Every one must give account unto God for himself in his baptismal vows, no less than in



any other phase of life, whether duty or privilege or experience. It is the fundamental principle, without variation and everywhere imperative—we might say, imperious, and cannot be set aside without dishonor to God and detriment, possibly peril, for the man. The experience of two young ladies is recalled as illustrating all this. They were of different communions, brought up in different sections of the country, of excellent home life and culture, and both baptized in infancy as they had been taught. One heard a sermon in which the preacher made the remark rather incidentally—"every one is answerable to God for his baptism." It could not be gainsaid, was an arrow between the joints of the harness, and smote her heart with the conviction that she could not answer for what she had received in infancy. The other came face to face with the question of baptism's being "the answer of a good conscience toward God," and felt in her soul that this was not true with her. Both of them after severe and prolonged struggle followed their Lord in personal obedience, were buried with him in baptism upon profession of a personal faith, and lived long and useful lives in his service.

The conscience needs enlightenment and training in a broad, general way, in order to be ready for emergencies and specific questions. A man's conscience is not unlike his watch, and needs regulating, setting and winding, and sometimes to be done all over in repairs. Sometimes there is a revolution in the conscience that sets everything

at a different standard and marks a new course in life. A man follows his watch and yet his watch may lead him astray. There is need for a regulator outside himself. And the answer of a good conscience in baptism stops not with self or with others, but is unto God as the supreme standard, and his Word for regulator and regulation. A man having an important engagement looks at his watch to find it stopped, having run down. He set the hand to the right hour, but when later looking to it for his guide he found the hands standing where he left them. He had forgotten the winding and so it failed him in the time of need. Something like this is all the while occurring with men in dealing with their conscience. Not trained in the usual, it fails in the unusual; not trained for today it goes all wrong in the emergency of tomorrow. There can be no right or safe training in conscience, no laying in store safeguards for protection and government in the affairs of life, except as God is made the supreme standard and his Word the supreme test of its decisions and judgments.

And now this final word concerning baptism and its serving as a voice for the good conscience. It is only when God is back of it all and recognized as ruling the life of the individual in this specific act. Cared for, and intelligently observed after the New Testament plan and pattern, the great ordinance is an education in conscience and individual responsibility. Some fail to see its use or service or exceptional worth, and yet it has

educative efficiency because of the great principles which it involves and commands. It makes God supreme in a man's character and life. It is far away from the question of "mere form," and deals with the profoundest questions in moral and religious thought. It sees God on the throne as person and judge of the whole earth, and brings human accountability to the front with mighty and startling emphasis. We cannot rule out these great personal obligations from a man's baptism, for in this, as he walks in the fear and joy of God, the voice of conscience makes itself known.

Personal baptism means personal salvation preceding, and this again means personal dealing with God in Christ Jesus. It shows God as an individual with the individual man, and Christ as the individual Saviour with the individual sinner—"My Lord and my God" being the personal conviction of every redeemed soul. He is God of the nation, and God of the family, but first and deepest; the God of the individual, man for man. And salvation is to *him that believeth*, and obedience is for *the one* to walk in the way of the Lord for himself for God's honor and glory. This great truth runs all through the Scriptures from God's first question to man in his sin—"Where art thou?" to the final invitation of grace—"Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." This is the basal principle in the whole Christian system, whether of being saved or of right living, whether in our thought Godward, or

in our conduct manward. It gives great character to individual obedience, whether ceremonial as in baptism or otherwise in the whole range of walking after the ways of God.

As illustrating its educational power, consider baptism, not in the abstract, but in a concrete case of one coming to the great ordinance for himself. He has found the Saviour and the Saviour has found him. He has the sense of pardon in his soul and seeks with joy the commandments of his Lord. This man for himself, whether accustomed to move among kings and princes or in the humble walks of life, is *baptized into the name*,—of the Father—and of the Son—and of the Holy Spirit—and so professes his faith in the Unity and Trinity of the Godhead, vows allegiance to each in his Person and office, and pledges his loyalty in baptismal vows as the line between his old life and the new. Nothing can be more sublime or more commanding among men, and its lesson for educational efficiency is reflected with every repetition of the great ordinance in the service of the King. This is individual baptism, the answer of the good conscience toward God—of the conscience renewed and turned in the way to seek his word and to follow his will.

## XV.

### BAPTISM A FIGURE OF SALVATION.\*

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“The like figure whereunto even baptism doth now also save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), by the resurrection of Jesus Christ; who has gone into heaven and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.”—1 Peter 3: 21, 22.

THE text, in its connecting link, is apparently not easy of translation, but the meaning is clear. The New Version does not help, but rather makes it more cumbersome. The apostle, speaking of Christ, who bore our sins in his own body on the cross “that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit,” came to speak of those who were saved through the ark. And then, to illustrate and enforce his thought concerning Christ, he characterizes baptism as follows: *In like manner even now* baptism, not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God, is the figure of our being saved through the resurrection of Christ. So we have in baptism the figure of his resurrection and of the salvation through him, “who was delivered for our offenses and was raised again for our justification.”

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\* *Religious Herald*, Richmond, Va., Oct. 7, 1915.

This is the thought which is enforced in the text and is of infinite moment in our present-day thinking and teaching. Christ's resurrection for our salvation is the reality, and baptism its picture—the original and its likeness, the historical event of one rising from the dead and its picture set out before the world. Ancient and historic as an ordinance, baptism, then, may be characterized in modern terms as the photograph or “moving picture show” with marvelous precision of what took place from the new tomb in the garden.

It may well remind us, in dramatic way and with no uncertain meaning, of the earthquake on that night of wonders in the world's history, the great stone rolled away, the Roman sentinels falling down as dead men, the risen Christ appearing and reappearing, the angels sitting in the empty sepulchre in white apparel, with the startling message from the other world: “Ye seek Christ crucified; he is not here; he is risen as he said; come see the place where the Lord lay.”

The apostle in the text speaks of baptism as something quite familiar to those to whom he was writing, and puts in a strong word as to its relation and noble use in the scheme of grace. Its fame had gone abroad even in those early years, from the Jordan and Jerusalem, “to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia and Asia”—signaling wherever the gospel was preached the triumphs of the cross and the risen Christ.

Four things are here said showing its wonderful significance and lofty character:

1. Though an ordinance requiring the physical act of immersion in water, baptism is "not the putting away of the filth of the flesh"—not a bath or washing or outer cleansing of any kind. It has marvelous outward meaning, as we shall see, but in no sense for cleansing the body or the life of its wrongs and pollutions—much less the inner cleansing of the soul from sin.

2. Baptism is "the answer of a good conscience toward God"—showing its spiritual meaning as distinguished from its physical act, indicating one's experience of grace, his conscious attitude and bearing toward God, and emphasizing its character and dignity as ceremonial obedience and worship.

3. Baptism is a figure of the salvation which is offered of God, as was the ark, to save from impending ruin, and which is accepted by the believer in Christ for deliverance and safety from sin, as with the eight souls when the flood came.

4. Baptism bears testimony to Christ as risen from the dead, having "suffered for sin, the just for the unjust," but now reigning in resurrection glory, having "gone into heaven and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject to him."

These several phases of this New Testament figure, while severally distinct, yet overlap somewhat and all center in magnifying its wonderful meaning and didactic character, whether we think of it as ordinance, ceremony or symbol. It is here magnified to magnify Christ and the salva-

tion which comes through him. God set it in the gospel system, and from century to century it has told the story of his grace with charm and power.

The word figure is somewhat unusual, but significant. It means an impression taken from an original pattern, or an expression of an original as seen in its copy—the outward declaration of an inward experience makes visible a soul transaction which, in its nature, is invisible. In the printer's shop it is a proof taken—the copy from its original pattern—the sign from the thing signified—the truth seen in picture and symbolic form as taken from the real and glorious truth itself. Herein is the greatness of baptism. It holds in symbolic form some of the most wonderful workings of God, and sets out to public view, in a figure, the mightiest and most rapturous experiences possible in the human heart.

The text, therefore, emphasizes baptism as a figure of salvation, a picture from its original pattern, a symbol of great realities. Salvation taken in the fullness of its meaning may be considered from different viewpoints with baptism serving as the figure, picture or symbol of them all. For example in brief, salvation may be viewed as God's work of grace in his provision for saving sinners; salvation may be viewed as the believer's experience in accepting of Christ through faith, in which he is saved, becomes an heir of God, and is as one risen from the dead; salvation may be viewed as the new life which one lives in Christ Jesus—a new life in God's



service among men; salvation may be viewed in its glorious consummation with resurrection power and glory for the believer in Christ—his “salvation ready to be revealed in the last day.”

All this the ordinance holds in figure and expresses in symbol. Baptism is not salvation, but its figure; does not save, but symbolizes the saving grace of God in Christ’s atonement for sin; baptism is not the resurrection of Christ, but its figure, marking that great event in its historical character and saving power; baptism is not the remission of sin or the washing away of sin, but their figure, the visible showing of the invisible cleansing and remission—not causative, as procuring, but declarative of something already come; baptism is not a new heart, cannot make the heart new, but is its figure, the outward expression of the inward change and experience; baptism is not a good conscience, but its answer, cannot make the conscience good, but meets its demand for obedience and walk in newness of life; baptism is not the resurrection of the dead, but its figure, the forecast of that wondrous event to which believers look as the consummation of their hopes.

Do I magnify this simple Christian rite too much? Is it not marked with honor and distinction throughout the New Testament wherever it has mention? Has not God, who set the stars in the heavens, set this significant ceremony in the gospel system as part of its organic life and charged it with the mission of preaching in figure and symbol the everlasting message of his grace? Do

we get all its wonderful meaning and learn its lesson as God would have us do? There are those who walk under the stars, but see nothing of their glory; who stand within the thunders of Niagara, and have no sense of wonder awakened within them. There are those, too, who can speak of this great New Testament ordinance as "mere rite," or "only a ceremony," or "an external thing" of little consequence. And others, not going quite so far, can make it an occasional jest or joke. Why, rather, should we not contemplate the great ceremony in its wonderful meaning, as Jesus did at the Jordan, and catch the full significance of his word: "Thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness"?

It is surely God's message in figure and symbol, and, reaching the heart through the eye, is something more powerful than the spoken word. Its content of meaning, expressed largely in its form, remains the same through all the years and centuries. It means the same to us, if only our hearts will receive it, that it meant to Jesus at the Jordan, or to the disciples on the day of Pentecost—all it meant, indeed, throughout those early years of triumph in preaching the gospel. We do well to set our hearts to this matter, and see that we do not come short in our estimate of the value and larger use of baptism as a figure of salvation.

Summing up and repeating somewhat, for sake of emphasis, baptism in its symbolic import or figure declares salvation or being saved to be of

God's grace, to be spiritual in character, to give a good conscience which no outward act can give, and that it comes through the resurrection of Jesus, and not in any sense through work of righteousness which man may do. The text, and other Scriptures as well, sets the resurrection of Jesus over against the great ordinance as reality and figure—as original and copy—the one a mighty event in the history of the world, the other its figure, unchangeable in form, unmistakable in meaning, and to abide through all times.

Through the centuries, therefore, in unbroken lines to this day, baptism has been the unwavering witness for the cross and the empty sepulchre, for Christ crucified but risen from the dead, and now at the right hand of God in the heavens. Taken, therefore, as the ancient ordinance set in the gospel system, it is now a powerful apologetic for that greatest of all events in human history. It cannot be answered, and its testimony, though silent, cannot be overthrown and is of dramatic power.

This particular phase of its value and meaning, though of such great worth with us, was not needed by the preachers of New Testament times. They needed no apologetic for the resurrection of Jesus. Some of them had been eye-witnesses of the risen Christ; all of them lived in easy memory of the event with unimpeachable and accumulative evidence, and needing no proof—even as we of today need no proof of the Civil War with its tragic upheaval and desolation.

They simply, but powerfully, proclaimed the resurrection without question, and expounded baptism as its wonderful figure, setting one over against the other—portraying both in word and symbol the wonderful achievement which God had wrought in raising his Son from the dead and setting him on high as King of kings and Lord of lords. This is the reason, no doubt, why Satan has sought diligently through the centuries to destroy baptism, and in later years to weaken its hold on the conscience and conviction of Christian people. For to destroy the picture, or even to mar its beauty and strength, would go far toward removing the original from the face of the earth.

But the glory of heaven is upon this lofty figure. As the undaunted sentinel of the ages baptism stands at the very place where Christ, though in the tomb, could not be holden of death, where death itself received its death blow, and where glory broke through the open sepulchre from the other side, bringing life and immortality to light. O death where is thy sting! is the song the baptismal waters sing to celebrate his resurrection power; O grave, where is thy victory! is their shout of triumph for his crowning day in resurrection glory. Thanks be unto God! is the word they have passed down the ages—who hath given us the victory through our conquering Christ, who himself “is on the right hand of God, having gone into heaven; angels and authorities and powers being made subject to him,” our Saviour and Lord.

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## Part II.

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### FIVE LECTURES IN OUTLINE.

(State Workers' Institute, Arkadelphia, Ark., February  
20-25, 1912.)

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### THE ORDINANCES.

Baptism and the Lord's Supper

THEIR DOCTRINAL CONTENT.

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*Dr. Augustus H. Strong*, Baptist:

"These ordinances and their order are doctrines incarnate—living expressions of the inmost reality of the Christian faith—monumental symbols of the truth of God."

*Dr. William Sanday*, Church of England, in commenting on Rom. 6: 4, concerning Baptism:

"It expresses symbolically a series of acts corresponding to the redeeming acts of Christ; Immersion=Death; Submersion=Burial (the ratification of death); Emergence=Resurrection."

*Dr. Plummer*, Presbyterian, Commentary on Mark:

"It is only when baptism is administered by immersion that its full significance is seen."

## A STATUARY OF TRUTH.

"Just as money deposits are committed not merely to the custody of a bank or corporation, but also to a strong room or safe, similarly I venture to affirm the Christian Gospel was committed for its safe keeping not to chosen men or to the church as a whole, and to the New Testament Scriptures, but to the two ordinances of the Christian church, the Lord's Supper and the Lord's baptism, and more particularly to the latter. The ordinance of baptism has been called a 'statuary of truth'; it contains a whole body of divinity; it enshrines, conserves and shows forth fundamental Christian doctrine.

"Hence when we contend for the apostolic observance of the ordinance, both as to its subjects and its mode, let it be carefully noted, we are not contending for a solitary question of doctrine, much less for a mere form of ritual, but for the right observance of an ordinance which is designed to focus and express many great and foundation doctrines. To substitute sprinkling or pouring for immersion is not such a trivial matter as substituting little water for much water, but it is to utterly destroy the emblematical significance of the rite, as Dean Goulburn points out with great justice and force in his Bampton lecture, and as Bishop Gore has recently declared in these words, 'We have in our church and country almost wholly lost the symbolism which belongs to baptism by immersion'."—*From Rev. W. J. Eddy, in The Baptist Union, of Victoria, Australia; quoted in The Baptist World, Louisville, Ky., March 7, 1912.*

## THE ORDINANCES.

### BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

#### Their Doctrinal Content.

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#### *General Introduction.*

CONTENT of national ensign. Celebrating historic events. Baptism and the Lord's Supper have immense teaching power as God's ordinances among men—his appeal to the eye and heart—his creedal statement—his formulary of doctrine. Ceremonies for worship, ordinances as means of indoctrinating. Symbols indeed, but symbols which never change in form or in what they convey to men.

Their doctrine is always the same—their doctrine concerning God, their doctrine of atonement for sin through the death of Christ, their doctrine of a new heart wrought by the Holy Spirit, their doctrine of a godly life, their doctrine of the final triumph. They are New Testament ordinances with New Testament meaning. The ordinances are new but their doctrine is of old, and independent of all rites and ceremonies. Distinguished from Judaism, yet of the same general import, being of God, and for the enforcement of spiritual truth.

They are as one in the unity of their doctrinal content, and must be considered together. Two

sides of one sphere, supplementing and completing. As monument and memorial, the one sign of the one event for all time—universal in language and meaning. They hold their integrity in three things—spirit, form, purpose—as essential in their administration. They are both of the same spirit, and of the same general purpose, and differ only in form and the elements used. One has its form in the immersion of a believer in water, the other in breaking and eating bread, in pouring out and drinking wine.

The form of the Lord's Supper has not been in dispute, the form of baptism is well defined by Dr. Sanday, an Episcopal scholar of England, and his word is the most recent word of modern scholarship concerning this matter of much dispute, as follows :

The act of baptism corresponds to the three acts of Christ's redemptive work ; Immersion=death ; Submersion=burial (or the ratification of death ; Emergence=resurrection.

Their teaching power is largely in their form. This is their significance, their sign-making power ; this makes the form essential in their administration, gives the form prominence with their spirit and purpose, requires that we hold them inviolate as they were commanded and committed to us. They must be as God made and marked them, if they bear to our eyes and hearts the message which God intended. God's Word must be God's Word, his meaning must be kept in view.



## LECTURE I.

### DOCTRINE CONCERNING GOD.

As seen in the Ordinances,  
Baptism and the Supper.

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#### SCRIPTURE :

*The Doctrine*—The Burning Bush (Ex. 3 : 13, 14).

*The Ordinances*—The Baptism of Jesus (Matt. 3 : 13-17).

CONNECT these incidents with the vision of Jacob's Ladder and the first observance of the Lord's Supper. These lectures throughout must be kept under the shadow of these mighty events in which God was dealing with men, and saying things which he meant should stand for all time.

Like other things which God appoints and sets in order, Baptism and the Supper make him known. We come to the baptism of Jesus with the single aim to learn what it teaches of God, to study God's revelation of himself on that august occasion—remembering, however, that every baptism reproduces largely the scene at the Jordan in spirit and form, in general purpose and resurrection forecast.

#### 1. In This Baptism God Bespeaks His Being, Person, Dwelling Place.

The occasion chosen of God for making his Son known—and he becomes known himself. The open heaven—the spoken word. Something like this in every baptism. Wonderful emphasis. Be-

lief in the ordinances means belief in God, his being, working power, gracious purpose. God reveals himself in dealing with men, and makes it of record in the Scriptures. To learn of him is basal in all religious thinking, the one vital, fundamental purpose.

## **2. God Seen in the Trinity of His Person.**

Four great events—the vision of Jacob's ladder—the burning bush—the Holy of holies—the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan, all serve one sublime purpose in making God known. They have their grading but culminate at the Jordan, and are passed on to us in august and overpowering majesty.

The baptism of Jesus goes beyond the others. In the burning bush we have the words, "I AM THAT I AM." That was the announcement of his self-existence and unity of being. In the baptism of Jesus and in every baptism since we have the three Persons of the Godhead—Father—Son—Holy Spirit. In setting his ordinance for all future time our Lord announced the baptismal formula, baptizing them into the name . . . and, lo, I am with you. Every baptism repeats and gives fresh emphasis to the revelation made at the Jordan.

## **3. God Commissions a New Ministry.**

In that great event God showed himself at work among men, set a new ordinance opening the way for the kingdom—a new regime with God lead-

ing the way. John was charged with a new ordinance—he was a man sent of God—sent to baptize. The scene at the Jordan was a convergence under the divine plan and purpose.

John's baptism, was it of heaven or of men? Shows God's purpose to save. This comes to the very heart of these New Testament ceremonies as to their deeper meaning, and is their crowning glory.

This tremendous matter was committed to men. The rite was a heavenly rite charged with mighty moment. Even John himself hesitated before the majesty of his mission—shrank from baptizing Christ even in the fulfillment of what he was sent to do. John held conspicuous place in that august scene—Jesus sought John—came from Nazareth to seek John, the man commissioned of heaven—forerunner of the King and the kingdom.

The administration of the ordinances reveals what God is doing among men and may well awaken a sense of awe. When one baptizes aright there you have in a noble sense a true successor to this first Baptist who himself was sent of God.

This is not said for denominational advantage, nor in the interest of any controversy. The successorship and kinship between our baptism and the baptism of Jesus lies in the thing itself which we are doing here and now—whether it corresponds in spirit, form and purpose.

It is a matter of kinship and character in the ordinances as we keep them.

#### 4. God's Presence with His Approval.

God was present at the Jordan as he is present in every administration of these ordinances. As at the creation, he saw it was good, so at the Jordan he looked on and was well pleased. The one surest and most emphatic word of these ordinances is their announcement of God's presence. Here we come face to face with God as in Jacob's vision—as in the burning bush—as in the Holy of holies. Their one mighty word—*God is now here*. The glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord, and the glory of the Lord was upon the scene at the Jordan.

There is no content of person, either in the water or bread or wine, or in the ordinances. It is doctrinal content vs. content of person. Announcement and manifestation of his presence. The doctrinal content is powerful and stirs the soul, as we see through the ordinances and discern their meaning. God makes himself known through symbols.

Jesus with his commanding word at the Jordan—thus it becometh us—opened the way for all who will follow, and our baptism speaks for us what his baptism spoke for him—with the open heaven above us, and God's word of approval. In baptism and the Supper we walk in God's ordinances and serve him, and the glory of the Jordan is upon the scene.

CONCLUSION.—The heavens declare the glory of God—so also the ordinances. Like the stars these ceremonies are without speech—silent elo-

quence like the music of the spheres. God's memorial unto all generations. Baptism unto baptism uttereth speech—one observance of the Lord's Supper after another showeth knowledge. Their voice is the voice of wisdom and mercy, of love and grace. His glory here outshining all the glory of his handiwork. Here we walk in his ordinances, keep his commandments, and the glory of the Lord is upon our pathway, shining brighter and brighter in the coming glory.

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## LECTURE II.

### DOCTRINE OF ATONEMENT FOR SIN.

As seen in the Ordinances,  
Baptism and the Supper.

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#### SCRIPTURE:

*The Doctrine*—1 Tim. 1: 15; 1 Cor. 15: 3, 4; Rom. 10: 9; Rom. 4: 24, 25.

*The Ordinances*—Rom. 6: 3, 4; 1 Cor. 11: 23, 25; Matt. 26: 28; Col. 2: 12.

This word—"according to the scriptures"—twice repeated with much point and emphasis, is the base line for all right-thinking in these weighty matters. It is the one supreme, imperial standard for Christian character and conduct, for all Christian belief and practice.

The first group of Scriptures state the doctrine of atonement for sin according to the Scriptures;

the second group describe the two ordinances of the gospel, Baptism and the Supper, according to the Scriptures. Together they give us the doctrine in word and in symbol. We here study the doctrine, the atonement itself, as seen in these ordinances, and we study the ordinances in their relation to the atonement.

The doctrine or significance of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, is in their relation to Christ, to his person and life, but especially to his death and resurrection. This was the chief emphasis, and also the one mighty meaning of the New Testament ordinances. They are of God—his appeal to the eye—his statement in symbol of sin with its atonement and cleansing, through the blood of the everlasting covenant.

Dr. Sanday's words concerning baptism has special emphasis at this point: "It expresses symbolically a series of acts corresponding to the redeeming acts of Christ; Immersion equals death; Submersion equals burial (the ratification of death); Emergence equals resurrection." And Dr. Plummer, a distinguished Presbyterian author, says in his Commentary: "It is only when baptism is administered by immersion that its full significance is seen."

This goes to the very heart of what the ordinances teach. They are vitally connected with the death and burial of Jesus, with his rising again from the dead and with his resurrection life—so vitally that their chief meaning is in symbolizing these mighty events. Their word is gracious and

powerful even in the deep things of God. They not only reveal God as seen in the former lecture, but show in glorious way what he has done for human redemption. They are symbols of his love and grace, and everywhere bespeak his praise and glory.

**1. A Guarantee of the Cross and Empty Sepulchre as Events of History.**

The ordinances have historical value in showing historical basis for the atonement. They testify for the Son of God, bear witness for his death and resurrection as historical facts. This is basal, and of imperative and infinite moment. As monument and memorial they present an unbroken line of evidence. Have been used perhaps too much as polemics, but not enough as apologetics.

Evidence in monuments—Sunday a new day—the New Testament a new book—the church a new organic life with new ordinances. These are all *here*—speak no uncertain sound—their voice is for the tragedy of the cross and the empty sepulchre—they concern his dying and burial, but go beyond that to tell of his resurrection and his resurrection life—that *he is alive again* and as Lord at the right hand of God (Rev. 1: 18). Contrast the words of these ordinances spoken among us today, with the words of the disciples on that first morning, with the words of the Roman guard, with the words of the angel, all converging in the fact that a new event had come in the world's history—the cross and the empty sepulchre.

These are historical facts, have rank as fact among other facts, whether of history, or nature, or science. This is of first importance both for the events themselves, and this is the prime word of the ordinances—a historical word with historical value. If Christ be not risen then all fail. There would be no ordinances except for the first coming of events; without the events the ordinances would have no meaning. In their form they stand for impregnable facts, and in these rest the hopes of the world as on the rocks of Gibraltar.

Life and immortality in a noble sense are brought to light in the ordinances, through their testimony. Never before or since have nature's elements told such a story, or served as such an evangel. We are baptized with reference to Christ's death and risen also with him; the memorial supper is in remembrance that he died and is alive again. Their testimony stop neither at the cross nor at the empty sepulchre.

## **2. Baptism and the Supper are Symbols of What Christ's Death Meant in Its Relation to Sin.**

This the symbol import of the ordinances; they interpret his death. Why this tremendous outlay of divine plan and purpose, energy and power? These simple rites undertake the gigantic task of making answer—God set them to make answer, gave them a tongue to tell their story. They give in symbol the *meaning* of



Christ's death, going beyond the cross as the historical fact to tell what the cross means, beyond the empty sepulchre to unfold its meaning to a wondering world. They interpret these events as Victor Hugo interprets the Battle of Waterloo.

The *truth* of history is often more wonderful than the facts of history. The ordinances both testify for the fact and unfold the truth. The meaning of the cross is the doctrine of the cross; the meaning of the empty sepulchre is the doctrine of the resurrection, and this is the word of the ordinances—that, "He was delivered for our offenses and was raised again for our justification."

We have here in symbol an epitome of Christian doctrine—that Jesus died, rose again, is still alive with his heavenly ministry. "These ordinances and their order are doctrines incarnate—living expressions of the inmost reality of the Christian faith. Monumental symbols of the truth of God."

The fact that he died—the doctrine that he died for sin—for our sin, for its atonement, for setting it aside in sacrifice and blood. The doctrine of sin and the doctrine of the cross are counterparts, are seen in their relation in these symbols—crucified with him, risen with him, have remission of sin in him and cleansing in his blood.

These ordinances are unchanged in form and meaning. The same now as at the first. Their significance is in their sign-making power. Symbols, monuments, memorials cannot change. We

must hold these ordinances together as saying practically the same thing and supplementing each other.

### **3. Baptism and the Supper an Emphasis of Atonement as Being Objective.**

All symbols are objective in their testimony, meaning, teaching. Baptism and the Lord's Supper give emphasis to the death of Christ as the atonement for sin its effects Godward. It is not of man but of God, and primarily has to do with him. They symbolize the *remission* of sin but this with justification and adoption must come of God. They transfer the scene from Calvary to the heavenly court. In a mighty sense they stand for things outside of ourselves, as to origin, merit, efficiency, effects; not of man at all, but of God in Christ Jesus. God is reconciled—God is just in saving. This is the word spoken in these ordinances with emphasis and power.

"The moral theory" is well enough, so far as it goes, but is insufficient. The power of the cross to move the human heart is not enough. Something needs to be done in the sinner's behalf, and that something was done on the cross and is emphasized in the ordinances. We may take them in the fullness of their meaning, or we may let them alone. They and the thing for which they stand are independent of our belief—like other great facts in nature with what those facts mean, as of the world turning on its axes, the running of the water to the sea. The supreme

matter of the atonement for sin is with God, within the veil, where our bleeding sacrifice appears.

These ordinances—baptism and the Supper, have not been given sufficient emphasis in what they *say for God*—what they *say for Christ*—as his ordinances holding before the world the meaning of his death. Their most tremendous meaning is not in what they do for man, but in what they do for Christ and for the atonement which he made for sin.

Nothing must be done to obscure what these ordinances mean for Christ and his work. To this end they must be preserved inviolate as they came from his hand—in spirit, form, purpose. They show him buried and risen from the dead, and ministering in a new life with the promise of his return. Let not his glory go to another. They minister for him and for his glory—first *for him* and then for man.

#### 4. Baptism and the Supper Declarative of Christ's Atonement Being Effectual Through Individual Faith.

It is of the nature and essence of signs and symbols to declare, to make manifest. Signs signify, symbols instruct. The ordinances are not something to be done for which there comes a *quid pro quo*. One observes them, not to get something but to show something—their blessings come richly but incidentally.

They are declarative in their very nature. This is their first purpose and they serve that purpose in their observance; monuments and memorials

celebrate. They do this for Christ, and serve him in the function of teaching, in the unity of their doctrine.

They declare Christ and his atonement, in the fullness of its efficacy as available to individual faith. They are open only to believers. He that believeth, etc., repent and be baptized, etc.

He that believeth and is baptizd shall be saved. Repent and be baptized for the remission of sin. Standing by a railroad train you would say to the passenger, go into the coach and you will be carried to Louisville—or go into the coach and *sit down* and you will be carried to Louisville. Sitting down is a thing to be done after you are in the coach. Baptism, and the Supper also, are something to be done after one repents, believes, is saved.

These ordinances become declarative of what has been done in the believer's behalf and of his new relation to Christ. Show his union with Christ. Outward sign of mighty inward transaction. Baptized into Christ; put on Christ in baptism—a creedal statement for the believer of Christian belief, a confession of his experiential relation to Christ and his saving grace.

Christ's baptism in the Jordan was declarative for him. It was God's occasion and method of making his Son known—his manifestation unto Israel and unto all the world for succeeding generations. He became a baptized Saviour that he might show himself a buried and risen Saviour, with a baptism for those saved through faith in him.

Christ has set these ordinances to this purpose, and in this purpose they speak their mightiest words. The badge of remission, of discipleship, of sonship, of relation to him. Symbol, picture and mirror. Symbol, setting things together in comparison with sign-making power; picture, a scene representing to the eye likeness, acts and emotion, concentrated resemblance—a heavenly invention to represent heavenly realities of thought and achievement, of purpose and promise; mirror, reflected image reproducing the past, making the invisible to appear, to move and gladden the heart.

What is the content of a picture in which you see the face dearest to you of all faces? What is the content of the mirror in its reflected image? What is the content of these ordinances? In baptism, the burial, the resurrection, the empty tomb, and the saved man in his risen life. In the Supper is reflected as in a mirror with startling vividness and power, the tragedy of the cross enacted over again—but also the risen Christ who is to return again.

Every baptism is a fresh evangel, repeating through the centuries the angel's word: "He is not here; he is risen as he said; come see the place where the Lord lay." Every celebration of the Supper tells of his death, but also that he is alive again, and is serving in the heavenly ministry, and that we are saved in him, are sustained through him, and await his coming. So the wonderful story goes on—fresh always as the new

sun for the new day—singing of the world's redemption, accomplished already and yet in process of the larger and final consummation.

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### LECTURE III.

## DOCTRINE OF A NEW HEART.

As seen in the Ordinances,  
Baptism and the Supper.

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#### SCRIPTURE:

*The Doctrine*—I John 1: 7; John 3: 3, 6, 7; John 1: 12.

*The Ordinances*—Acts 2: 38; Acts 22: 16; Ez. 11: 19, 20.

IN becoming a Christian there is a threefold experience: (1) The remission of sin, (2) the cleansing from sin, (3) the making of a new heart. This means a change of relation to God, a change also in the spiritual nature. "He is a new creature in Christ Jesus; old things are passed away; all things have become new." They are the people of God and he is their God.

The two sides of this change is described in the words, remission of sin, and a new heart. Distinguished and emphasized by the prepositions *for* and *in*—what God does for us, and what God does within the heart. These two things cannot be separated except for emphasis, and carry with them for each individual all that is meant in salvation.

For "the remission" of sin equals pardon or forgiveness; must stand with justification, and adoption into God's family as his children through faith in Jesus Christ.

What takes place in making a new heart has many expressions—being born again, passing from death into life, translation into the kingdom of God's dear Son, a new creation in Christ Jesus, a change of heart. All this indicates God as the worker in its operation, and the heart as the subject of his influence and power, of the new found experience. This is the doctrine of the new heart as seen in the Scriptures.

But the two ordinances—baptism and the Lord's Supper, as outward ceremonies—what have they to do with a new heart—with this new relation to God, this working with a new nature within, this cleansing of the heart from sin, this making of the guilty conscience clean? In one sense nothing whatever. In another sense, baptism and the Supper have wonderful significance and power in their relation to the new heart and in their emphasis of this great doctrine.

#### **1. These Ordinances Require a New Heart for Their Rightful Observance.**

A person needs fitness for these ordinances—a fitness which comes from a power on the outside and which works within. John sent some away from his baptism because they lacked fitness. A heavenly requirement for a heavenly fitness and service.

It is a serious thing to miss these ordinances as to nature, meaning and manner of observance—to misplace them in their relation to God and his work, as to their doctrinal order and significance, as to where they stand in the kingdom of God and his economy of grace.

One may eat and drink unworthily—may administer baptism unworthily—fail to discern the Lord's body in the one, his burial and resurrection in the other. Baptism pushes one away, requiring of him a new heart. The Lord's Supper pushes one away and requires of him a new heart.

This is the highway of the King and none but the children of the King are permitted in its boundaries. These are the garments of the palace for the wearing of those who are new within. They have no meaning for the unsaved, the un-renewed, cannot be appreciated by them—as a blind man in an art gallery or a deaf man in a concert hall of music. The sacredness of these ordinances has not had sufficient emphasis, nor has their voice for a new heart been sufficiently regarded.

## **2. Baptism and the Lord's Supper—In No Sense Can They Make the Heart New.**

They demand qualifications, prerequisites which they themselves cannot give. They are for saved people, have no meaning or advantage for the unsaved, except perhaps to show them the



need of salvation. Let there be no mistake at this point.

It is just here that all the controversies among Christians have centered concerning the ordinances. Baptismal regeneration—making the heart new through baptism versus being born from above through the Spirit of God. Baptismal remission of sin—taking away sin through baptism as a meritorious act—being saved by baptism, etc. From these egregious blunders to the other extreme of counting the ordinances mere rites and of little consequence.

Over against all this we set the Scriptures as quoted in the text and others. The ordinances are physical acts and inadequate for the mighty change which is wrought in the spiritual nature with the direct working of God in the heart—with the inner man each one in himself—making him a new creature, etc. God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

### **3. The Ordinances Make Expression in Symbol of the New Heart's Experience.**

This is additional to what was said in the previous lecture concerning the objective emphasis and declarative purpose of the ordinances. There they spoke for Christ in his objective relation; here they speak of his saving grace in the heart, as experienced through faith in him. There objective, here they speak for a subjective work.

They are outward expressions of inward realities. Thoughts, feelings, experiences, emotions—all have their methods of outward expressions. The inner heart laid open in the ordinances. The author expresses his thought in words on the printed page, the painter with his canvass, the sculptor with his marble. God wishes to show what he has wrought in the heart, and makes exhibition in baptism and the Lord's Supper. The believer wishes to show what he has experienced in the heart and shows it in baptism and the Lord's Supper. The one word is, that old things have passed away, all things have become new, and these ordinances are set to tell the wonderful story.

Remission of sin means there has been a settlement with God; the believer has felt in his heart God's resurrection power as when he raised Jesus from the dead, and he himself is alive again as one from the dead; has experienced in his heart the cleansing of the blood—shares with Christ in being raised from the dead and living again in him. Crucified, nevertheless alive. God's son through faith in Christ—all this has its announcement in the great ordinance as the believer is buried with Christ in baptism. He owns the power divine and beyond human resource. Is willing in the day of God's power. It is a wonderful expression of the soul's surrender as with Saul of Tarsus—surrender of mind, of will, of all the old life, of purpose, and setting oneself to a new life for the glory of Christ.

#### 4. **Baptism and the Lord's Supper Serve as Means for the New Heart's Culture.**

Their effect in the life, marking and making the inner life open and outspoken. Do not save, yet a means of grace for those who are saved—a means of grace for Christian growth and advancement. No culture can turn the thistle into vine of the vineyard—yet the vine may be nourished.

The ordinances are for indoctrinating, and great doctrines have great cultural power.

Two thoughts confront us. There is doctrine in the very *order* of the ordinances—raising from the dead precedes the risen life. Jesus raised the young girl from death and then refreshments were administered.

Jesus was baptized on entering his public life with the Lord's Supper coming after—resurrection before a new life—regeneration before sanctification—baptism before the Lord's Supper—bringing to life before nourishing—made a new creature in him first, and then living a new life in him.

The other thought much emphasized here is the exclusiveness of the ordinances—by their very nature—by the things they stand for. The born of God—the baptized for him—the living in his word. Symbols of mighty things they are, and stand as symbols in the King's highway, as the banner in the kingdom of God. A baptized people following a baptized Saviour—sitting at his table as commanded and in remembrance of him.

Surely we should see to it that in spirit and form and purpose, our baptism is the Lord's baptism, our observance of the Lord's Supper in deed and in truth the Lord's table.

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## LECTURE IV.

### DOCTRINE OF A GODLY LIFE.

As seen in the Ordinances,  
Baptism and the Supper.

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#### SCRIPTURE :

*The Doctrine*—Psalm 1: 1; Psalm 84: 11.

*The Ordinances*—Rom. 6: 4; Matt. 3: 15; Luke 1: 6.

“BLESSED is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly—for his delight is in the law of the Lord.” These scriptures with many others give emphasis to the ordinances as to their practical value and their relation to a godly life.

God makes a new heart within, gives a new spirit that we may walk in his statutes and keep his ordinances. By his own gracious power he makes us his people and he becomes our God. We show to the world that we are his in our walk, in our relation to his law and what we do with his commandments.

We owe it to our Lord to interpret his ordinances aright, and it becomes us to hold ourselves in right relation to baptism and the Lord's Supper. If we walk not uprightly in the ordinances, will we walk uprightly anywhere?

Each of these several texts is to be emphasized and they in turn emphasize the doctrine of a godly life in relation to God's ordinances—in general, and in relation to baptism and the Supper in particular. Out of it all we get several lines of related thought.

### **1. The Ordinances Protest Against Formalism.**

There is no room for formalism, mere ceremonial performance, in a life dealing with God and reflecting God. Religion and formalism are incompatible and contradictory. A godly life comes of a godly heart. A godly life versus formalism. If baptism and the Supper run to formalism, it is no fault of theirs—their very nature and meaning are against it. The keeping of these ordinances is a godly act—the expression of a godly heart.

The godly man has his delight in the law of the Lord, and this law is his life. Without this the ordinances are of no avail, then indeed baptism and the Supper are “mere form”—easily, perhaps inevitably, settle to formalism, dead and hurtful formalism.

If God be not King in the heart, then he is not King in the life. Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee. The inner principle regulates the outer action—restraining or leading.

The highest law; thou shalt love the Lord thy God—with all thy heart—with all thy soul—and

with all thy mind (Matt. 22: 37). Over against this, contrast the ordinances without the heart or with a wrong heart. Simon Magus an example, a fearful possibility. But trust in the Lord with all thine heart, etc. Then comes the walking in his commandments and ordinances. This gives a godly life—righteous before God—upright as related to him—but of the heart in which he has wrought his work of grace, set up his kingdom and rules in the heart.

## **2. The Ordinances Present a Form of Godliness.**

A new life within demands a new life without. The outward and the inward in religion to be guarded all the while and kept in proper relation. The ordinances demand a godly life—a life in the open with God—walking in his commandments and ordinances. This in addition to their demand for a new heart. To have the heart right is not sufficient—a new life as well as a new heart is the imperative and imperious demand from baptism and the Supper. They require an open life for God.

Baptism is the answer of a good conscience before God. It calls for a walk in newness of life. An Indian appeared for baptism, dressed in white in token of the life which he thought he was to live, said to the people he was to walk the Jesus road.

Baptism and the Supper demand a new heart as we come to them, a new life as we go out from

them. We begin at baptism as Jesus began at the Jordan, and follow on to the upper chamber with him in the lead. The reversal of this order contravenes the Scriptures, sets at naught the meaning of the ordinances.

Notable example in Zacharias and Elizabeth. The high word said of them concerning their observance of Judaism. They lived to the finish the Hebrew system. Walking in the commandments and ordinances they made for themselves a highway between their home and the heavenly places—kept company with angels—even Gabriel came that way when affairs of state required. In their home life and temple service they completed the old dispensation—righteous before God. Christ opened the new dispensation at the Jordan with that commanding word of his, it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness—and was baptized.

Godliness is of the heart, but its form is of the outward expression and of great moment. The form of godliness without its power—even in baptism and the Supper—to be avoided, yet the form with power to be greatly desired. Its power does not come to the full of privilege until showing itself in form. To preserve and keep baptism and the Supper as commanded and committed to us is of immense moment—a demand of the heart made new. For those who go that way there is satisfaction and joy in the sense of doing God's will. Like the Ethiopian, they go on their way rejoicing.

### **3. The Ordinances are a Plea for a Godly Life in Christ Jesus.**

They stand for New Testament righteousness—godliness in Christ Jesus. They emphasize the Lordship of Jesus, his sovereignty. Law-maker in Zion, as well as Saviour. Here we come into a new realm and yet in full accord with the highest and best things in the old.

Baptism and the Lord's Supper being from Christ and of the New Testament, are the mark and call for the Christly life. They are his law, and have the royal seal of his example. Godly is more than religious, Christly is more than godly, more specific, full of meaning and emphasis, puts Christ and the things of Christ at the front—glorifies God in Christ Jesus. They mark a baptized people following a baptized Saviour.

Saul of Tarsus, prior to his conversion, was moral because he obeyed his conscience, was godly because he thought he was doing God's service, was religious because he worshiped God, as his fathers had done, but after his conversion he was Christly, his was a godly life in Christ Jesus, with Christ as center, enthroned in his affections.

So it comes that baptism and the Lord's Supper are a powerful element in the Christly life—as marking the life we live in him, in its rise and progress—in regeneration and sanctification. Crucified together is the solemn word, raised up together is the word of triumph and joy.

Here again we come in marked way upon the exclusiveness of the ordinances. They demand a



separated life, separated from the world. After the Jordan, Jesus went no more to his old life at Nazareth. This is the newness of life. These ordinances in their very nature demand the church in its organic life, and the church demands the ordinances as the bond and badge, as the pledge and expression of fellowship. The best church life is the fullest Christ life—filling out the fullness of his purpose and plan; the best Christ life is the most godly life. This is walking uprightly as he would have us walk, and he will give grace and glory.

#### **4. The Ordinances Illustrate the Worth of a Godly Life.**

Worth whether in the Old Testament or the New—for both the present and the future. For the individual and the community. (1) Gains favor with God; (2) reflexive in its influence on character; (3) instructive and full of inspiration to others.

In addition to its worth in general a godly life, showing in these ordinances as a form of godliness, has distinct doctrinal character, and great doctrinal value. In their practice they are an abiding testimony for fact and faith—the most stupendous fact in history and the mightiest experiential faith known to man, even possible to man. Living a godly life among people makes one an educational center and power. The ordinances become our creed in a great sense—our banner in the name of our God—show what we

believe. They carry in this way the power for testimony, for great uplift, conspicuous and commanding.

The ordinances express in symbol what we find in the great statement of the apostles. I am crucified with Christ, etc. A formal statement of Christianity in beautiful form. Show history—doctrine or creed—experiential grace and ministry or mission in the church of God after God's plan. Show how the cross stands,—inseparable from the empty sepulchre, at the center of Christian history, of Christian doctrine, of Christian experience, of Christian ministry or mission; show the very heart of church life and power—of what Christ has done for us—of what he wants us to do for him.

From every standpoint we get tremendous emphasis for the importance of preserving these ordinances as they were given to us. Their perversion in spirit, form or purpose is far-reaching in deadly effect both on character and doctrine.

This is the godly life, a godly walk—a walk worthy of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Goes the way he went, shows the cross and crown, the course and consummation for our Lord and for those who are his and who follow him. The emblem of his rule, the badge of our loyalty. They show where our allegiance is. Every baptism is his fresh coronation by those who love him—every observance of his Supper is a fresh memorial of his death—of his resurrection and resurrection life. In a great sense we may say

for him: He set his throne in his ordinances and made his ordinances the symbols of his sceptre rule over all.

Walking in the ordinances is high mark of favor in the kingdom and has the glory of heaven upon its pathway. In a figurative sense yet gloriously, as the rugged framework holds the great picture of the artist, so these ordinances hold in themselves the destiny of the ages—when God shall show the wonders of his grace in Christ Jesus—proclaiming before him his rule for the ages to come.

“The Lord will give grace—in the progress, and glory in the consummation; no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.”

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## LECTURE V.

### DOCTRINE OF FINAL TRIUMPH.

As seen in the Ordinances,  
Baptism and the Supper.

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#### SCRIPTURE:

*The Doctrine*—I Thes. 4: 16, 17.

*The Ordinances*—Col. 2: 12; Col. 3: 1, 4; I Cor. 11: 26; Matt. 26: 29.

IN these several passages we have a statement of the doctrine of the future according to the Scriptures—stated in word and symbol. Baptism and the Lord's Supper have a prophetic

voice, and their voice is for life and immortality. As monument and memorial they shine in the glory of the far-away past, and for the future they have a word of no uncertain meaning. They catch the foregleam of coming glory.

This lecture brings us to the crown and glory of all that has been said. Is this life all? Does death end all? Is there anything beyond the dead—beyond the grave? These mightiest of all questions—what answer do they have in these two ordinances of the New Testament? What is the meaning of these two simple, beautiful ceremonies which you find in the faith and practice of every church of Jesus Christ—concerning the great future?

They are now what they were at the first in spirit, form and purpose. They are without change like their great Author who set them in the fullness of their meaning. For instruction and comfort, for encouragement and inspiration. Their record has been unbroken for the past, what is their word for the future? They are New Testament ordinances with New Testament meaning. They cannot teach any doctrine which is not first taught in the Scriptures, but they stand for well-nigh everything that God has made of record concerning the redeemed of the Lord.

The symbolic word cannot go beyond the written Word, but may illuminate the record by appeal to the eye and through the eye to the heart. The symbol and the word are one in their voice for the future. The one is promise with the dec-

laration of power, the other is foretold, shining in the foregleam of the future, the one is prophetic, the other pledge—but all combining at the one glorious center and consummation of the work of grace in human redemption.

**1. Baptism and the Supper Forecast the Lord's Return, and the Final Resurrection.**

The ordinances can hardly be misread in their testimony, wonderful token and meaning concerning this mighty doctrine. In every baptism there is resurrection forecast; in every observance of the Supper the memorial is sunlit with that wonderful word, "Till he comes,"—casting its glory upon the far-away horizon. The voice of the Supper is, the Lord himself shall descend from heaven, etc.; the voice of Baptism, "The hour is coming when all that are in the grave shall hear his voice," etc.

These ordinances so simple in form balk not at the gravest difficulty or at presenting in themselves the mightiest of all paradoxes—the Lord born as announced to the shepherds, the Lord buried and risen as spoken from the empty sepulchre, the Lord dead and now alive again—enthroned and to return in power and great glory.

The words of Dr. Sanday, as applied to Jesus himself, has wonderful significance concerning those who are his: "Immersion equals death; Submersion equals burial (ratification of death); Emergence equals resurrection." The empty sepulchre becomes forever the victory and the victor's crown.

Baptism and the Lord's Supper, as a mirror turned on the past, show his death and resurrection; turned on the present, they show him at the right hand of God ministering as our intercessor in the Holy of holies, and active in working out human redemption; turned on the future, the mirror catches the glory of his return and reflects its splendor full on our face and heart. Christ the first fruits, then they that are Christ at his coming—as the engagement ring promises the wedding ring—as the crown promises the coronation.

**2. The Baptism and the Supper Forecast the Judgment and Final Separation Between the Saved and the Lost.**

What beyond the resurrection? What beyond the judgment? There is a difference between men here in their relation to Christ, also when they stand before the judgment. Those that confess him—those that deny him.

In every baptism there is in certain sense a judgment, or a badge of distinction—those who do the will of his Father; every memorial Supper is a separation between believer and unbeliever in their relation to Christ as Saviour, Sovereign and Lord. The separation here and there is based upon relation to Christ and this relation to Christ has wonderful manifestation in the ordinances which he has left with us.

Like a rainbow overarching the centuries, these ordinances reach from cross and empty sepul-

chre in the past to throne and coronation in the future.

They have no curative or procurative power in themselves, and yet are intended for a class and serve as badge for class distinction. Their voice always and everywhere is for the impending truth, that the righteous and unrighteous shall not live together in the kingdom of God, do not share his favor alike, shall not walk the heavenly fields together. Separation is a large and ominous word, and yet with fearful meaning shows the significance of these ordinances as we observe them and contemplate the future. But what beyond the separation.

### **3. Baptism and the Supper Forecast Companionship with Christ in the Kingdom of His Father for Those Who are His.**

“I will not drink of this cup until that day I drink it new with you.” The words show (1) heaven a place, (2) identity and recognition, (3) companionship, fellowship with Christ. Like a long distance telescope these ordinances carry our eyes and hearts right into the heavenly places. We see the saints and the King of saints—the Lamb and those washed in the blood of the Lamb—the glorious assembly of the redeemed who sing the song of redemption.

We do not rightly measure or magnify the companionship of saints as set forth in the ordinances—the brotherhood of believers, their fel-

lowship in baptism—their fellowship in the Lord's Supper. These are symbols indeed of what has been done but symbols also of what is yet to be when the King shall come in his glory and all his holy angels with him.

**4. Baptism and the Supper Forecast Ultimate Triumph of Our Lord and the Final Consummation of His Work of Grace.**

This the final word of baptism and the Supper. This has been their word from the first until now, and shall be until the work of grace is done. They bespeak the reversal of all that death has wrought in the world's history. They hold in joyous contemplation the life everlasting, the new city where there shall be no more dying.

This is their word. They stop not at difficulties or oppositions or impossible things. They appeal to our faith as when Jesus stood at the tomb of Lazarus.

When bidding his disciples farewell, and while speaking of coming kingdoms and crowns, the Lord knew that already the mob was gathering on the outside for tomorrow's work. But he spoke his word—set his meaning in symbol, and these symbols have never faltered in their testimony. Their word is more certain about nothing than this final word for the future—the heavenly future of the saints of God. "As oft as ye eat this bread and drink this cup," as often also as ye baptize, "ye do show the Lord's death till he come."





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